THE GOSPEL OF INCARNATE LOVE

Merciful Lord, we beseech Thee to cast Thy bright beams of light upon Thy Church, that it, being enlightened by the doctrine of Thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist S. John, may so walk in the light of Thy truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE GOSPEL
OF
INCARNATE LOVE

A COURSE OF
MISSION SERMONS AND MEDITATIONS
WITH THREE LECTURES
ON
THE GOSPEL OF S. JOHN

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION
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INTRODUCTION

MY dear brother, the author of these pages, has given me the privilege of reading them in the proof-sheets, and wishes me to write down some of the thoughts which they have given me.

First, they bring back the memory of the goodness of God in many past missions. I find words which I have heard from Father Bickersteth's lips when I have been allowed to work with him; words too which have passed between us when we have talked much to one another of the message which has been entrusted to us. I have gone back in mind to Aberdare, where the warm hearts of the Welsh were stirred by words like these, so that I remember two hundred men singing the Litany through the streets, and helping to win for God out of the street a soul like hers, whom St. Paul rescued from the Python spirit at Philippi. I remember, with deep gratitude to my brother, as well as thankfulness to Almighty God, the fervour which he was allowed to kindle amongst those who are very dear to me in

Somersetshire. As the scenes which the words recall come before me, I feel how much more they contain than mere words spoken from the pulpit. I see the missioner pleading in direct conversation with one after another led out of the crowd; I knew that those interviews often cost more, and win more than sermons. But it is not only the pleading or consoling that fills the picture. There is a time of greater spiritual power, when, as the result of preaching and conference, the mission-priest sits in the tribunal of peace, and the gift of the first Easter Day is used and proved once more.

I cannot but hope that one way in which this book may bear fruit will be that it may encourage some of our younger brethren to pray that they may miss no opportunity of a call from God to mission work. The call may come in many ways. It came to me by a telegram from Father O'Neill, who has now for many years been praying for us in Paradise. I would earnestly beg my friends not to give a too ready ear to the assertion that the time for missions has passed. I know that what is called a mission visit does not cost so much, and may often bring real fruit, but the element of time must not be passed over when we are thinking of the adaptation to our circumstances of what is nothing less than the gift of prophecy. For many of our people the impressions of the Sunday are lost during the week.

A mission is a week or a fortnight of Sundays, and I am bound to say that experience of more than fifty missions leads me to wish that they should be longer rather than shorter. I do not forget that the faithful preaching of our Lord may do the great work in a moment; Aaron's rod can blossom in a single night; but Paul spent weeks, or even months, in local missions.

One part of the book belongs very specially to Father Bickersteth himself. I do not know that any other missioner has taken the opportunity of a mission to set forth the intellectual grounds for the acceptance of the Fourth Gospel. I can believe that Father Bickersteth had good reason for doing this both before and after he did it. But I may be allowed to say that a man may be a good missioner who does not feel able to imitate him in this part of his method. It is possible to commend the Gospel of S. John to the acceptance of men without requiring them to weigh evidence in a balance which needs a trained hand.

If any one were to say to me that arguments such as those here given leave a transient impression on his mind, or even that he suspects his own capacity to form a satisfying judgment on them, I could not deny that my sympathies would be with him.

For me it is enough to say that my Maker has

bestowed on me a gift of faith, that is certain conviction, as to the Godhead of our Lord, and that it is incredible to me that, since God has indeed become man, the only permanent records of that unique act should be gravely misleading. It is surely no rash inference that He Who has given His Son to take our nature, and has assured millions that He has done so by an imparted gift of certainty, would not have allowed those inspired millions to rest on a false account of the redeeming acts of the Incarnate Son. I do not doubt the high value of such inferential argument as Father Bickersteth has here given us, but I do not think it leads us beyond high probability, and we still need the gift of faith which gives us certainty.

I ought to add that I have not read the Instructions which are included in this volume. I do not doubt that in them full justice is done to the greatness of the gift of faith.

V. S. S. COLES.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE generous words in which the Principal of the Pusey House has introduced my little book give some excuse for its publication. There are very many people who look back upon some parochial mission as a season of very deep and blessed spiritual experience, and thus value the record of words spoken at such a time, though it is quite impossible for cold print to reproduce the spiritual atmosphere in which they were originally uttered. It is well known that the spiritual influence of a mission depends far less on the words spoken by a missioner than on the months of previous preparation, in which faithful souls have pleaded for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. For the sake of those who wish to recall the vivid impressions of a mission, it seemed best to reproduce the actual situation by leaving the allusions to those spiritual movements which are happily characteristic of all real mission work. To the cold and critical outsider it may seem presumptuous to speak of people coming in large numbers to the missioners for

counsel and confession, or rejoicing in the fresh assurance of pardon, peace, and power; but to those for whom this book is mainly meant no record of a mission would be complete, or even true, without them.

The author has been constantly engaged in mission work for twenty-one years, and he has an increasing confidence in the permanent value of missions where the elementary conditions of efficiency are not neglected. There must be diligent and prayerful preparation; loyal co-operation between the missioner and parish priest, while the latter must have the sympathy and support of his people; the element of exhortation and appeal to the emotions must be duly balanced by the element of instruction. The missioner must win the confidence of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ by insisting mainly on those central doctrines which are common to all real Christian people, whether they would describe themselves as Catholic or Evangelical. When once this confidence is won, men will gladly welcome plain teaching about the Church and the Sacraments, and we are not surprised to find the somewhat rigid Churchman exhibiting the fervour of a Methodist, while the lifelong Protestant makes his confession and welcomes the daily Eucharist.

In mission work amongst the poor I have chiefly used the Gospel of S. Luke, and I have often found

that nothing more was needed for the sermon than an exposition of one of the lessons for the day; but for many years past I have found that a course, such as this, on the Gospel of S. John was more likely to interest an educated congregation. In some two or three parishes, when it was possible to gather a select congregation of leisured people on a week-day morning, it seemed well to touch on critical questions, as in the three lectures included in this volume. Mr. Coles has very wisely pointed out that such an attempt is by no means an essential part of mission work. It may sometimes do more harm than good, but it seems right to show that one deeply sympathizes with restless and eager minds, and that the mission has a message for those who are in doubt. If my slight effort to justify on rational grounds the traditional belief in the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel does not seem convincing, I can but refer my readers to the solid works of Lightfoot, Westcott, and Sanday, on which my own position is mainly based.

The meditations on the great instances of self-assertion have usually been given before or after an early Eucharist. They represent, however poorly, a very important part of mission work. While one tries through the evening mission sermons and instructions to attract those without, the meditations at the Eucharist are intended for the deepening of the spiritual life of those

within. They suggest a method of that meditation on the Word of God which every one must learn to practise for himself if he desires to grow in grace.

This volume cannot be taken to represent a complete course of mission teaching, for it omits the special addresses to women, which are generally given in the afternoon; and the instructions to children, which are best given when (where county councils are propitious) the children assemble in church at 9 a.m.

In some ways the most solid and important part of a mission is the course of instruction which follows the mission sermons at night. I had not intended to bring my instructions into this volume, because I have already published the substance of them in another form, but at the request of some, who thought this might be useful, I have added in an appendix a brief outline of the main points on which one is accustomed to insist.

The sermons, lectures, and meditations have been entirely rewritten with a view to publication, and they do not exactly represent what was said in any particular place, but most of the sermons were preached in substance at Longworth; Great Budworth; S. John's, Leeds; S. Augustine's, Kilburn; S. Nicolas, Guildford; S. John's, Hammersmith; Benhilton; S. John Baptist's, Newport; Bloemfontein Cathedral; S. Andrew's, Plaistow; and more recently at Gillingham and Lickey.

The mention of these places evokes in the writer's mind grateful memories of happy work and holy fellowship with friends from whom he has learned far more than he can ever hope to teach, and he can but express his gratitude to Almighty God, Who rewards the preachers of His everlasting Gospel by giving them the love and trust, and, best of all, the intercessions, of those to whom they minister.

In the actual preparation of this volume I owe much to many friends, and amongst them especially I ought to mention my sister, and my brother in the Community of the Resurrection, Richard Rackham. The latter, in revising the proofs, has rescued me from many mistakes, but must not be held responsible for the errors which remain.

C. B.

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SERMONS

I

A Message from God

"One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon." — S. John i. 40, 41.

A MISSION is a message and a call from God. It is an effort to arouse the careless, to convert the sinful, to raise the fallen, to quicken the faithful, and to bring all souls alike nearer to God. It is meant for those within and for those without—as the children say, it is meant to make bad people good, and good people better. There are none so bad that the grace of God cannot make them good, and none so good that there is not plenty of reason for seeking to be made a little bit better. This twofold object might be expressed in the words of the Psalmist, "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem; and gather together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth those that are broken in heart, and giveth medicine to heal their sickness." [1]

A mission is but one of the ways in which God is calling souls home to Himself. Times of sickness and sorrow, the loss of fortune or the loss of friends, the ordinary services of the Church, the loving persuasion

[1] Ps. cxlvii. 2, 3.

of a friend, or some unkindly taunt, may be to many the memorable occasion of a call, which awakens one to the danger of sin and the need of repentance, or summons another to a life of active service and of closer communion with Christ.

Special efforts must be made by preaching in the streets, by visitation from house to house, by special addresses to different classes of men or women; but within the walls of the Church our one aim must be to convince of sin and inspire a longing for holiness by preaching the Word of God. For reasons, which I hope may be obvious later, there is no better subject for a course of mission sermons, instructions, and meditations, than the Gospel of S. John, and therefore I propose that we should make some special study of the Fourth Gospel as a whole.

For the mission sermons, addressed night after night to a general congregation, we will take some of our Lord's dealings with individual souls, which were evidently recorded with special care to illustrate the growth of faith. Men and women, one by one, were led to recognize in Jesus Christ not merely a Teacher come from God, but the Saviour of the world, until at last the always loving and once doubtful disciple could greet his Risen Master with the great confession of a hard-won faith, and cry, "My Lord and my God."

In the early mornings at the Holy Eucharist we will try to meditate on those remarkable instances of self-assertion on which S. John lays special stress.

For persons of leisure and education something must be said at a separate time, first of the grounds on which we believe that the Fourth Gospel is indeed the work of the disciple whom Jesus loved ; and second, something about the famous prologue and the great discourses which take the place in S. John, which is filled in the other evangelists by the record of our Saviour's simpler preaching to the multitudes.

II

At the outset let us remember that the Gospel of S. John was written for those already familiar with the outline of the life of Christ.

However we attempt to unravel the separate strains, and analyse the Synoptic Gospels, it is certain that at least the Petrine memoirs, or the Gospel according to S. Mark, must have been widely known for more than a generation before S. John wrote down or published his inspired meditations on the scenes of which he had been an eye-witness sixty years before.

Towards the close of the first century men and women like ourselves, familiar with the Gospel story, must have felt at times troubled and perplexed. How could they reconcile these wonderful things with the prevalence of evil round about them and within ? They had wrongly looked for a speedy second advent, and as one by one the witnesses, who had seen the Risen Lord face to face, passed away, they clung to S. John as the

last left alive who could say, "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, and which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness)." [1]

S. Jerome tells us how it happened that S. John "was compelled by nearly all the Bishops of Asia, and by deputations from many Churches, to write more deeply of the Saviour's Godhead, and, so to speak, to break in upon the Word of God with a courage which was not bold but happy." Browning has embodied the old tradition as he describes the death in the desert, and the aged Apostle's message to the world—

> "If I live yet, it is for good, more love
> Through me to men: be nought but ashes here
> That keep away my semblance, who was John.
> Still when they scatter, there is left on earth
> No one alive who knew—(consider this!)
> —Saw with his eyes and handled with his hand
> That which was from the first, the Lord of Life.
> How will it be when none more saith, I saw?
>
> * * * * * *
>
> "I went for many years about the world,
> Saying it was so; so I heard and saw,
> Speaking as the case asked; and men believed.
> Afterward came the message to myself
> In Patmos isle; I was not bidden teach,
> But simply listen, take a book, and write."
>
> *Death in the Desert.*

We too, troubled and perplexed, may well endeavour to confirm and strengthen faith by sitting in spirit at the feet of the beloved disciple, as he tells us what made

[1] 1 S. John i. 1, 2.

his own faith so sure and steadfast, and how men and women were brought to know that Jesus was indeed the Revelation of Incarnate love.

Our time will not be wasted if a fresh study of the Gospel enables us to say with renewed conviction—

> "I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ,
> Accepted by the reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it."

III

If a mission is a message and a call from God to individual souls, we cannot do better than consider the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ called His first disciples; and at the outset of a mission, at a service chiefly intended for Church-workers, we begin with S. Andrew, for he is the true type of a Church-worker, alike in his personal devotion and in his missionary zeal. His personal devotion, for he followed Jesus without delay; and in his missionary zeal, for his first thought was to bring his brother; and all that we know of his after-life and work, is consistent with that beginning. When our Saviour began His work by gathering round Him a band of disciples, "that they might be with Him and that He might send them forth to preach,"[1] some were ready and waiting for His call. They had been prepared by the ministry of S. John the Baptist; they had listened to that stern, strong preacher of repentance,

[1] S. Mark iii. 14.

bidding men flee from the wrath to come; they had learned their need of a Saviour; and when he pointed to the Christ, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," they were ready to follow Him without delay. Jesus called others who were by no means in the same condition.

As though to make it plain from the first that none are beyond the reach of His voice or the power of His grace, Jesus called Matthew from the receipt of custom.

The son of Alphæus had taken up with a bad trade, in which no Jew would engage unless he was indifferent to patriotism and religion, for a publican was always unscrupulous, and generally dishonest. We know how the love of money hardens the heart and makes a man well-nigh incapable of hearing a religious appeal; but the Lord called Matthew—and "he forsook all, and rose up and followed Him." [1]

So we may be sure that there are none in this place whom the appeal of the mission cannot reach; we may be sure that the most unlikely people, sunk in utter worldliness and sin, may yet become in their measure the apostles and evangelists of Christ.

Others, as we shall see later, were inclined to scepticism or incredulity, but S. Andrew, S. Philip, and S. John the Evangelist himself, were ready and waiting for the call.

S. Mark tells us that S. Andrew and S. Peter were together by the Sea of Galilee when Jesus passed by,

[1] S. Luke v. 28.

and his account of their call is familiar from the words—

> "Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
> Of our life's wild restless sea
> Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
> Saying, 'Christian, follow Me.'
>
> "As of old Saint Andrew heard it
> By the Galilean lake,
> Turn'd from home, and toil, and kindred,
> Leaving all for His dear sake."

S. John's account (which of course refers to an earlier occasion) connects their first knowledge of the Saviour with the time of His baptism at Bethabara.

It is enough to know that S. Andrew was one of those simple-minded souls who needed but to spend one evening in the company of Jesus to be sure that he had found the Christ. Happy, indeed, are they who find Jesus, or rather are found of Him, and are ready at once to bring others to share the joy of that discovery.

Assuredly it should be so with us; personal devotion and missionary zeal go hand-in-hand. No man really knows and loves the Saviour if he is not ready to do all that in him lies to spread the knowledge of His grace.

To-night we need not linger over all that is involved in following Jesus. That, please God, will be clearer before the mission ends, but something must be said of missionary zeal. S. Andrew, and probably S. John the Evangelist himself, began his missionary work by going to look for his own brother. So surely, if our missionary zeal is true, we shall begin with the effort to bring nearer

to Jesus the members of our own family and kindred, or the friends with whom we are most familiar.

It is only too common to take a very opposite course; some who would not hesitate to speak of spiritual things to casual strangers find their tongues tied when they ought to speak for God to a wife, a husband, a brother, or a child. It is perhaps because we have an instinctive feeling that our intimate associates know us too well; they would feel that some inconsistency, not to say insincerity, in our Christian conversation should make us silent. Well then! let the thought of our duty to those we love drive us to commune with our hearts and discover what it is that ties our tongue and hinders us from giving the word of warning or exhortation that is due. We can, at least, begin our missionary work by bringing those nearest and dearest to us into the presence of our Lord as we mention them one by one in fervent intercession. If we really pray for others, and if we really aim at personal devotion, we shall find that the mission will give us ample opportunity of saying in all humility just the words that are needed to bring others to our Lord.

As I said, the remainder of S. Andrew's life was all of a piece with this beginning. S. John tells us how he was the disciple who won the confidence of the little lad who brought his little store of loaves and fishes to the Lord. Others might think the problem of feeding the hungry multitude insoluble, but S. Andrew, at least, would do his best, and leave the results with God. He

too was the natural person to deal with the Greeks who said to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus."[1] The man who began by bringing his own brother was the man to welcome, and bring to Jesus, those whom He regarded as the firstfruits of His passion. The coming of the Greeks foreshadowed the ingathering of the Gentile world, when the promise should be fulfilled. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."[2]

[1] S. John xii. 21. [2] S. John xii. 32.

II

"Come and See"

"Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."—S. JOHN i. 46.

IT is often said that the age in which we live is an age of unbelief, and certainly the last two or three years have seen a remarkable revival of attacks upon the Faith.

Not long before he died, Mr. Gladstone wrote to his wife, "I am convinced that the welfare of mankind does not now depend on the state of the world of politics; the real battle is being fought in the world of thought, where a deadly attack is being made with great tenacity of purpose and over a wide field upon the greatest treasure of mankind—the belief in God and the Gospel of Christ."[1]

It may well be questioned whether the attack is so determined, or the confidence of the attacking party so great, as it was some thirty years ago, when the influence of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer was at its height in the Universities, and when Mr. Charles

[1] "Morley's Life," vol. ii. p. 500.

Bradlaugh was the recognized leader of a large section of the working class.

It seems as though the dominant philosophy in really educated circles is now on the side of faith, and there is scarcely any trusted leader of democracy in England whose influence is definitely anti-Christian.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the large sale of the publications of the Rationalist Press Association, and the considerable circulation of the *Clarion*, suggest that there is a widespread unsettlement of religious belief.

Admitting all this, it would be ludicrous to suggest that unbelief is anything like what it was in the eighteenth century. When the great Bishop Butler wrote the preface to his famous "Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Course and Constitution of Nature," in 1736 he said—

"It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if in the present age this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

The most timid apologist would not use such language to-day if he reflected on the history of the past half-century and the present situation. Of the

men who have ruled England in the past and present generation, three at least have been prominent as Christian advocates. Mr. Gladstone took his stand on the Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture; Lord Salisbury was the chosen champion of the Church in resisting an attack upon the Athanasian Creed; Mr. Balfour has written a book on the "Foundations of Belief," which is amongst the ablest intellectual defences of orthodox Christianity.

Of the poets who have left the deepest mark upon our literature, and who were the most in sympathy with the perplexities and aspirations of the best minds amongst us, the attitude of one may be expressed in his own words about the friend to whom he rendered the splendid tribute of the "In Memoriam" [1]—

> "He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
> He would not make his judgment blind,
> He faced the spectres of the mind
> And laid them: thus he came at length
> To find a stronger faith his own."

And the other surely expressed his own innermost conviction when he put into the mouth of the Pope in the "Ring and the Book" [2] the words—

> "There is beside the works, a tale of Thee
> In the world's mouth, which I find credible.
> I love it with my heart; unsatisfied,
> I try it with my reason, nor discept
> From any point, I probe and pronounce sound.
> * * * * *

[1] Tennyson, "In Memoriam," xcvi.
[2] R. Browning, "Ring and the Book," Book IV.

What lacks then of perfection fit for God,
But just the instance, which this tale supplies
Of love without a limit? So is strength,
So is intelligence; let love be so,
Unlimited in its self-sacrifice.
Then is the tale true and God shows complete.
Beyond the tale I reach into the dark,
Feel what I cannot see, and still faith stands.
I can believe, this dread machinery
Of sin and sorrow would confound me else."

The fact that men like these, so strong and vigorous, so much alive to intellectual movements of the day, came to ground themselves securely on the Gospel of Incarnate Love is reassuring, but their example and their words would not justify an attitude of indolent acquiescence in the creed of Christendom. We have, each for himself, to examine the foundation and then build upon the Rock, if the edifice is to stand secure.

It may seem to some that a mission is a time for direct appeal to the conscience and the will, and that any attempt to argue and discuss is inappropriate, and perhaps a hindrance to direct spiritual work.

That may be so, and for the most part I shall confine myself, at least in the evening sermons, to the direct assertion of the claim of Christ upon the individual soul; but this afternoon, speaking to a congregation of men, amongst whom some probably are in an attitude of hesitation or unbelief, it is worth while to lay stress on the fact that his friend called one, who was a sceptic, to come and see, and that our Lord gave him a place amongst the disciples.

Whether there are amongst us this afternoon unbelievers or not, it is certain that we shall meet with incredulity or hesitation when we try to influence those without.

Some years ago at a conference of clergy, who were discussing the causes and cure of unbelief, one who was present startled the meeting by saying that in his experience the causes of unbelief were three—carnality, conceit, and Calvinism.

The combination of these three was a shock to some who were present, but one felt that it was more than a clever bit of alliteration, a jingle of three words beginning with a "C."

Carnality, or sensuality, is certainly a common cause of unbelief. If it is written, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," the opposite is equally true. The man who gives way to sensuality and self-indulgence defiles the imagination, darkens the heart, and does his best to blot out the very thought of God and the future life.

On this most serious and awful subject I propose to speak quite plainly on Wednesday night. As to conceit, I think that few will deny that my friend was right in describing it as a common cause of unbelief. We have all met the rash young man who aspires to a reputation for smartness by making jokes about the Bible or the Church ; and it is obvious to older and wiser heads that it is but the irresponsible chatter of a man who wishes to make himself the measure of the universe.

If Calvinism must be assigned as a third cause of unbelief, it is not that one denies that Calvin taught much that was true, for in some respects he differs very slightly from S. Augustine or S. Paul; but the term Calvinism is used to cover a once popular theological system, which was revolting to the moral sense and a libel on the Gospel of Incarnate love.

No one who is acquainted with modern popular attacks upon the faith can fail to see that our opponents are often attacking, not the Gospel as we know it, but a gross caricature, which represents the Eternal Father and lover of mankind as consigning to an endless hell the mass of mankind who have not consciously accepted the Gospel of Christ.

But there are many people in an attitude of hesitation or unbelief who deserve a more respectful treatment. There are those to whom one would say, with S. Augustine, "Let these be hard against you who do not know with what difficulty the eye of the inner man is made clear—how hard it is, even in ever so small a degree, to understand God." [1] "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." [2] We have no right to assume that unbelief is always due to an evil life, or the lack of a humble, childlike heart, or the effect of a distorted creed. There are real difficulties, and many a soul is earnestly seeking light who needs nothing so much as our prayerful sympathy and the loving invitation to "come and see."

[1] Epistle to Faustus. [2] Rom. xiv. 1.

So let us notice the way in which S. Philip dealt with the doubts of his friend Nathanael.

S. Philip himself was one of those happy, childlike souls to whom the things of faith present no perplexing problems. Formerly a disciple of the Baptist, he heard Jesus say, "Follow Me." He did so, and was convinced at once that he had found Him of whom Moses and the law and the prophets did write. His first thought was to bring his friend. But Nathanael was a man of different mould: cautious but not indevout, sceptical but longing for the truth, his was a case well worth our close attention, for in him prejudice gave way before experience, and hesitation yielded to the loving persuasion of a friend.

Scepticism is not in itself a crime, for the true sceptic is a seeker after God, and is it not written, "If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me, ye shall ever surely find Me"?[1]

Nathanael's difficulties were partly due to the fact that he had been a more diligent student of the Bible than his friend. He knew that Bethlehem, not Nazareth, had been foretold as the birthplace of the Messiah. It seemed to him, to say the least of it, unlikely that any good thing could come out of Nazareth. Why should he suppose that the son of a carpenter from a neighbouring village should be the Saviour of the world?

In short, he raised questions that his friend was unable to answer; and you and I may easily encounter

[1] Jer. xxix. 13.

a similar experience. We must do our best, and we ought to be much better equipped than we are to defend the faith, but we may easily meet with men cleverer and more thoughtful than ourselves, whose difficulties we cannot solve and perhaps not even understand, but still we can imitate the method of S. Philip.

He did not rebuke his friend for his unbelief, or suggest, like Job's comforters, that his doubt was due to sin. He did not argue, for he felt his own insufficiency for that—he was himself a recent convert with a very imperfect, and in some ways mistaken, notion of the person of our Lord; he did not argue, for he knew that faith is the outcome, not of intellectual discussion, but of personal contact with the Saviour.

If Nathanael may be termed a sceptic, he was an earnest and diligent inquirer, so he could not reject the invitation of his friend, or refuse to investigate the truth of his statement.

He came, and as he came, one to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hid, looked upon him with a glance of loving welcome. Jesus said, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael was astonished to find that he was known and loved. He cried, "Whence knowest Thou me?" Jesus answered and said, "Before Philip called thee; when thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee." It was enough to come into His presence, to hear His words, and to know that He has read one through and through, and Nathanael reached at once to a faith

which went far beyond that of his friends. "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God. Thou art King of Israel."

His faith was rewarded by the promise of a fuller revelation. Jesus answered and said unto him, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee beneath the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And He said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Yes, indeed, to confess the faith of the Incarnation is to see the ladder joining earth and heaven, on which "the angels of God find foothold as they fulfil their ministries of love."[1]

But leaving Nathanael and thinking of the man, standing without, yet ready and anxious to believe if we can but show him how, what do we mean by the message, "Come and see"?

Do you mean, he asks, that I am to take a leap in the dark? Am I to accept your creed before my reason is convinced? Do you want me to do what is contrary to my reason?

We answer no. To make an experiment is not unreasonable; not unscientific; it is the very method which has done so much to extend the frontiers of human knowledge.

Kepler, the great astronomer, tells us that he formed and tested nineteen different hypotheses before he discovered the laws of planetary motion. In that

[1] Dr. Westcott.

and in many another department of human knowledge hypothesis has led the way, and crucial instances have proved its value.

Even so in the things of religion, a man must make his venture of faith.

He must take the word of others in the first instance —believe them when they tell him that the living God hears and answers prayer; that Christ is the Friend who never fails; that He can deliver from the guilt and dominion of sin. We cannot compel belief, but we can say, out of the fulness of personal experience, "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

To be quite practical, and to apply our test to the special occasion of a mission, we say, Come to the mission. Study with us this wonderful gospel of S. John; listen to the instructions in which we try to give a clear and reasonable account of Christian doctrine; cast out of your life, without delay, all that your own conscience disapproves, and, above all, pray for the light and guidance of the Holy Ghost.

"Send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to Thy holy hill and to Thy dwelling."

III

The Need of a New Birth

"Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto Him by night, and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that Thou doest except God be with him."—S. JOHN iii. 1, 2.

EVEN a careless reader must be struck by the contrast between the Gospel of S. John and the other three. It contains no continuous narrative of the life of our Lord; it omits much that is obviously essential to a complete account of His work and ministry; it does not record the institution of the two great sacraments of the gospel; it does not mention our Saviour's supernatural birth nor describe His ascension into heaven.

There is a change of scene from Galilee to Jerusalem; in place of the preaching to the multitudes and the wonderful collection of parables recorded by S. Luke, we have long conversations with individual disciples. Above all, this gospel lays much more stress upon the tremendous claims of Jesus, and gives us a higher conception of His Person.

In particular, S. John records seven famous instances of self-assertion—

Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life;"[1] "I am the Light of the world;"[2] "I am the Door of the sheep;"[3] "I am the Good Shepherd;"[4] "I am the Resurrection and the Life;"[5] "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life;"[6] "I am the True Vine."[7]

It has often been pointed out that these are things which could not be said of himself by any mere human teacher without intolerable presumption. They give the greatest possible force to the old dilemma. If Christ said these words, He was either God, or not a good man.

We will try to meditate on these great sayings one by one after the early Eucharist, so we need not linger over them now, except to notice, in passing, that they are not quite without a parallel in the Synoptic Gospels.

No less a claim is implied in the great saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[8] It is not surprising that the difference between the Fourth Gospel and the other three has led some to question its trustworthiness and authenticity, and I shall try to explain in some morning lectures during this week the grounds on which some careful study during the last twenty years has made me more than ever convinced that the Fourth Gospel was the work of an eye-witness, who gave to the Church the results of his lifelong meditations on the true meaning of the events which he saw with his eyes,

[1] vi. 35. [2] viii. 12. [3] x. 7. [4] x. 14.
[5] xi. 25. [6] xiv. 6. [7] xv. 1. [8] St. Matt. xi. 28.

and the words which he heard with his ears. I believe with all my heart that we have a genuine certificate of authenticity in the words which attribute the gospel as a whole to the disciple who lay upon the breast of Jesus and stood beneath His cross. "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true."[1]

For those who lack the leisure or the inclination for critical inquiry, I believe that faith will be confirmed and strengthened by devout meditation on the seven great sayings to which I have referred, and by the study of S. John's account of our Lord's dealings with individual souls.

This afternoon some of us were thinking of a sceptic brought to Jesus by the loving persuasion of a friend; to-night we must think of an earnest inquirer, who came of his own accord, but with an altogether inadequate and erroneous conception of what he needed and what Jesus had to give.

Nicodemus was a man of the Pharisees; a ruler of the Jews; a member of the Sanhedrin; the teacher of Israel; and so it required no ordinary degree of courage and humility to come and seek an interview with the Galilean prophet. He came by night; probably because he lacked the courage to come by day, and this, the common view of his case, is consistent with the mention of him later in the gospel. We are told that he defended Jesus before the Council merely

[1] S. John xxi. 24.

on the grounds of abstract justice,[1] and when he brought his offering of spices, it was after Joseph of Arimathæa had begged the body from Pilate.

But it is more important to notice the zeal and earnestness which compelled him to come at all, than the cowardice which perhaps prevented him from coming by day.

It is no easy thing for a man to break through the prejudices of birth and education, and to defy the conventional standards of his profession. Perhaps there are some here to-night who cannot make any profession of religion without defying the public opinion of the society in which they live ; or who cannot be known as convinced and devoted adherents of Christ, until they have made up their minds to encounter some degree of opposition, ridicule, or contempt.

If there be one who is drawing near to Jesus, though it be with timorous, half-hearted steps, he may be sure of a welcome from Him who said, "Whoso cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."

Nicodemus came prepared to acknowledge Jesus as a teacher come from God. He was convinced by the miracles or signs which He wrought. "No man can do these signs which Thou doest except God be with him."

The modern seeker after God is not at first impressed by the miracles, which Jesus wrought nearly two thousand years ago. Until he is convinced on other grounds of the truth that Jesus Christ is God

[1] S. John vii. 51.

incarnate, the ancient records of His miraculous powers may be a hindrance rather than a help; but instead of the ancient signs there are obvious signs to-day in the mighty works done in the Name of Jesus Christ, and these go a long way to convince every candid inquirer that he ought to look carefully for what lies behind the manifestation of superhuman power.

The political student, the scientific historian, the practical philanthropist, acknowledge what the Gospel of Christ has done for the people. In the words of the Bishop of London, "It was the Gospel which taught morality to Europe; it was the Gospel that brought a spring of purity, and therefore hope, into the decadence of Rome. . . . It was the Gospel which taught the dignity of labour; the Gospel which gave woman the position she holds to-day; the Gospel which everywhere inaugurated schools, until it had taught the State its duty; and the Gospel which produced the passion of pity for the poor and suffering which built the hospitals."[1] But notice that our Lord did not accept the homage of Nicodemus, as though it were enough to own Him as a teacher come from God.

Mankind in general, Nicodemus in particular, and every soul here to-night, need something more than teaching. So the Lord, answering an unspoken question, said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."[2]

[1] "Faith of Church and Nation," p. 46. [2] S. John iii. 3.

Man wants not more instruction, but a new start; power from above to heal and restore the wounds of nature, and to be the source of new life.

It seems that Nicodemus felt at once that the Great Teacher had touched his deepest need. Yes, he wanted a new birth, but how could that be? He lays hold of the metaphor of birth, and expresses his sense of the utter impossibility of the hope it suggests. Can a man be born when he is old? Here am I with my habits formed, my character fixed, with the marks left upon me by the words and thoughts and deeds of the years that are past. I can as well imagine myself once more a little child, coming out of my mother's womb, as experiencing any change in my moral nature so complete as to deserve the name of a new birth.

The difficulty is one which is felt increasingly as the years go on. In middle life, or in old age, when we grow accustomed, alas! to the weakness, the imperfections, the sins which cling so closely round us, we can scarcely believe in the possibility of moral change.

But the Lord Jesus insists, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born from above." [1]

Our Lord repeats and insists on the necessity of this

[1] S. John iii. 5–7.

fundamental change, but in the repetition He adds an explanation of the power by which it can be brought about. This new birth is the work of the Spirit. It is true that human nature, left to itself, is incapable of the moral amendment for which we sigh, but there is a Power all-sufficient for our needs if we will but look up.

We may well suppose that the conversation which, as reported, can be read in five minutes, occupied upwards of an hour, and as our Lord talked with Nicodemus, the wind whistling round the eaves of the house suggested invisible, mysterious force.

We cannot see the wind, which strips the trees, and drifts the snow, and wafts the ships to the haven where they would be, but its effects are everywhere manifest.

So it is with the breath of the Spirit; Who raises dead souls to life, and fills with energy, light, and love those who, apart from Him, were dull and dark and irresponsive.

At this stage in the mission we do not linger to insist on the bearing of our Saviour's words on the doctrine of sacramental grace. It is enough to notice that our Lord Himself has linked together the water and the Spirit. In the words of Bishop Westcott, "The two are co-ordinate, correlative, complementary. Hence all interpretations which treat the term water here as simply figurative and descriptive of the cleansing power of the Spirit are essentially defective, as they are also

opposed to all ancient tradition." Here, as elsewhere, the Gospel of S. John is less concerned with the sacraments than with the eternal principles which underlie them, and to-night I must insist, not on the sacramental channels through which grace is given, but, first, on the supreme necessity of a new heart and a new life, and then on the power of the Holy Ghost, Who raises us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

Are there not some here to-night who know how much they need a new start? We know well enough what manner of men we ought to be; we have seen in others degrees of holiness, which make us feel ashamed and sorry for our own low aims and poor performance; above all, we recognize in the earthly life of Jesus the standard at which we ought to aim; but we feel ourselves to be entangled in a chain of habit which we know not how to break.

To all such the mission comes with a message of hope. The power of the Holy Spirit, of which our Lord spoke to Nicodemus, has been felt by myriads of believers from that day to this.

Hear the words in which a great bishop describes his own conversion. Speaking of his former state, he says, "I seconded my own besetting vices; I despaired of improvement; I looked on my faults as natural and home-born; I even favoured them. But so soon as the stain of my former life was wiped away by help of the life-giving wave, and a calm, pure light from above flooded my purged breast; so soon as I drank of

the Spirit from heaven, and was restored to new manhood by a second nativity; then, marvellously, doubts began to clear, secrets revealed themselves, the dark grew light, seeming difficulties gave way; supposed impossibilities vanished; I was able to recognize that what was born after the flesh, and lived under the rule of sin, was of the earth earthy, while that which was animated by the Holy Spirit began to belong to God."[1]

S. Cyprian is speaking of a case in which the new birth coincided with the grace of Holy Baptism received by an adult, consciously turning from sin to God.

The effects of baptismal grace are just as real, though a person baptized in infancy may not be truly converted to God until he has reached maturity. Many a man has lived, unconscious of his spiritual birthright, until the hour of his conversion enables him to appropriate and use the grace of God received in infancy.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, yours may be the like experience. Do you acknowledge that you need a changed heart and a new life? Then hear the words which follow: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and bear witness of that we have seen."

These glorious possibilities are within your reach, because the Saviour has come.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,

[1] S. Cyprian, "Ad Donatum," IV., quoted by Archbishop Benson, p. 16.

even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

NOTE.—*The mission sermon was followed by an instruction on the meaning and purpose of the Incarnation.*

IV

Conviction of Sin

"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."—S. JOHN iv. 10.

WE are trying during the mission to make some special study of the way in which our Lord dealt with individual souls, as it is recorded in the Gospel of S. John.

Last night we were thinking of one who was earnestly seeking after God. He was, indeed, greatly mistaken in his original estimate of Jesus Christ, but our Lord taught him that he needed not merely more light but a new birth. The record of that wonderful conversation is incomplete, and we cannot tell where the evangelist passes from the report of our Saviour's words to his own reflections upon them; but we know from the sequel that Nicodemus became a disciple, and at last showed himself openly on the side of Christ. To-night we pass to a different scene, and we must study the case of a woman, who seemed at first to be altogether incapable of perceiving spiritual things.

It is an easy and delightful task for a preacher when he has to speak of the love of God, and the power of

His grace, to souls who are conscious of their need, and eager and anxious to listen to the message of the Gospel. But we are often saddened and disappointed when we go amongst men and women who are so much absorbed in the pleasures and cares and riches of this life, that the very mention of religion excites weariness, disgust, or incredulity. If that has been the experience of some workers in the mission, I beg them not to be discouraged, for we shall learn to-night how the Lord Jesus Christ dealt with one of those seemingly hopeless cases.

Our Lord was on His journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, and must needs pass through Samaria. Let us notice in passing how the evangelist displays an accurate knowledge of the geographical situation and the local customs, which stamps his narrative as that of an eye-witness; and still more let us notice how he—the evangelist, who insists on the Godhead of the Eternal Word—is also the one to mark the signs of our Saviour's true humanity.

It is S. John who tells us that Jesus wept by the grave of His friend, that He acknowledged the anguish of His thirst upon the cross, and so he tells us here that Jesus was wearied with His journey as He sat by the well. He who calls the weary and heavy laden to Himself knew what it was to be tired, and hungry, and thirsty, and sad. It is just the fulness of His sympathy with our human weakness which brings Him so close to our hearts.

He was weary as He sat under the noontide heat, but not too weary to attend to the needs of the poor sinner who came and met Him there.

As the woman came out to draw water from the well, it was what we should be inclined to call an accidental meeting. Yet nothing is really accidental—Aristotle was right to say, "Chance is but hidden cause"—and behind all accidental meetings thoughtful and religious men see an overruling providence. It was not chance which brought the sinner and the Saviour face to face; it is not chance that brings this congregation here to-night. Whether it were mere curiosity, or religious zeal, or the earnest persuasion of a friend that brought you to the mission service, in the providence of God we have met for a purpose, and we can but pray that the purpose of God may be fulfilled.

The conversation opened when the Lord Jesus asked the woman for a drink of water.

> "His are the thousand sparkling rills
> That from a thousand fountains burst,
> And fill with music all the hills;
> And yet He saith, I thirst."

As on the cross, so by the well, our Lord condescended to ask for a drink, and the woman, instead of responding at once to such a simple request, expressed her astonishment that He, being a Jew, should ask a drink of one who was a woman of Samaria. Her churlish answer throws a flood of light on the unhappy results of religious discord. Jews and Samaritans were so much opposed

to one another that common courtesy was strange to both. We have, alas! our own sad experience of religious differences, but I trust that we do not carry them so far as to fail in acts of courtesy and kindness to those who do not share our religious beliefs.

And then the Lord, forgetful, if we may say so, of His own bodily wants, and thinking only of that poor needy soul, began to speak of the living water which He alone could give.

He tells her of the gift of God—what is it but the gift of which we read in the previous chapter? God so loved the world that He *gave* His only-begotten Son. But the woman knows nothing of its value, and she is as yet all unconscious of her need. She can but think of Jacob's well and the cool water to be drawn from its depths. Who is this stranger who speaks of water better than that?

Again our Lord draws out the contrast between the water which quenches, but only for a while, the thirst of the body, and the water which shall become in him, who receives it, the well-spring of eternal life.

Still she cannot, and will not, understand. She is like those people of whom we are inclined to despair, because they are so impervious to entreaty, so incapable of receiving spiritual truth. They would listen eagerly to any one who could tell them how to secure some temporal advantage, or how to escape from the dreary drudgery of their daily work, but the mention of spiritual things awakens no echo in their

hearts. We are too ready to give them up and try to cultivate more fruitful fields, but the Lord Jesus found a way to this darkened heart. He, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, saw that there was a moral cause for her spiritual blindness, and so He said, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." These simple words laid bare the degradation of her life. She could not lie in the presence of Incarnate Truth. There came from faltering lips a half-confession of her guilt, and the Lord took up her words and said, "Thou saidst well, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband; this hast thou said truly."

Her state of spiritual apathy, or death, is easily explained, when she stands discovered as a bad woman who has lived in lawless union with first one man and then another, and is no true wife at all.

Those sins of sensuality, more than any others, corrupt the mind, defile the heart, and paralyse the will; but lust is not the only sin which makes men indifferent to religion. Avarice, worldliness, indolence, and many other forms of self-indulgence, are sufficient to account for blindness or unbelief, and the preacher who would kindle spiritual aspirations must first convince the soul of sin.

But notice how the convicted sinner flinches from the piercing sword of the Spirit. She does what many another does in the like circumstances; she endeavours

to turn the conversation. "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

So we ministers of Christ know well how, when we speak to men and women about their souls, they are apt to turn aside distasteful subjects by some such words as these: "You are a clergyman—will you tell me what is the truth about Church and Dissent, or what is the meaning of lighted candles on the altar, or what do you think about passive resistance?"

Questions of the sort may have some slight interest or importance in themselves, but indeed it is a pitiful thing when they are raised merely to screen the soul, and evade all important questions, such as these: Are you yielding to the claim of God? Are you willing to confess—forsake your sins? Are you striving to make your peace with God through the precious blood of Christ?

Again we turn to the method of our Lord. He told the woman plainly that the Jews were right and the Samaritans were wrong. The Jews were right because they were worshipping God in the place and in the way which He had appointed, while the Samaritans were worshipping God in a fashion which they had devised for themselves. Their religion was vague, indefinite, without an object and without a creed. He said, "Ye worship ye know not what."

But our Lord did not linger over such questions,

when the matter in hand was the awakening of a soul dead in trespasses and sins. He told her that the days were coming when the questions at issue between Samaria and Jerusalem would pass away. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

It is this claim of the Eternal Father on the souls which He has made for Himself which we try to press home in a mission on all alike; and when that claim reaches the heart of one who is guilty and convinced of sin, it leads inevitably to the expression of a need. "The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ); when He is come, He will declare unto us all things."

The awakened soul feels its need of Christ, and then in a moment the need is satisfied, for He reveals Himself in the words, "I that speak unto thee am He."

Now, the supreme interest and importance of this chapter lies not only in the conversion of the woman, but in the effect that her testimony had upon the men of the city. Samaria was ripe for a mission—our Lord bade His disciples look on the fields, white already with harvest, and the first missionary was a converted woman.

We men are sometimes reluctant to be led by a

woman in matters of religion, though such reluctance is unreasonable enough. There are few men who do not owe their earliest and best religious impressions to the mother, who first taught them to pray and first spoke to them of Jesus.

Again, there is many a man who lives a braver, purer, nobler life, because he wishes to be worthy of some good woman's love. All this is only natural, for if a woman was the cause of untold sorrow to the world, when she listened to the tempter and offered to the man forbidden fruit, yet when God brought His salvation into the world He chose a woman to set right the wrong. It was by a woman's fidelity to her wonderful vocation that the way was opened from heaven to earth, and God came down to dwell with men.

Ever since blessed Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word," the influence of good women has been the chief means of leading men to God.

But perhaps you say that this does not apply to the woman of Samaria. Her influence on the men of the city arose not from the fact that she was good, but that she had passed through a wonderful transformation. The men of the city had known her as a worthless and degraded creature; but when she tells them that she has met with One who told her all that ever she did, and that she believes Him to be the Christ, they cannot resist her invitation to come and see.

There is no better evidence of the power of religion than the conversion of a sinner, and no one is more likely to arrest attention and draw men to Christ than one who is a living monument of the transforming power of His grace.

God grant that those amongst us who are being turned from darkness to light—from the power of Satan unto God—may without delay bid friends and neighbours "Come and see."

The men of the city came, and coming were convinced, so that they were able to say to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking; for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

In the beginning we are all dependent on the parents, teachers, preachers, and books by whose influence we are brought into the presence of Christ, but no man's religion is upon a sound and permanent basis until he is able to say as they did, that he is no longer dependent on the testimony of others;—for he has reached the assured conviction of one who has opened his heart to Jesus, and knows by personal experience that He is indeed the Saviour of the world.

NOTE.—*The sermon was followed by an instruction on the nature and effects of sin.*

V

The Exercise of Faith

"When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?"—S. JOHN v. 6.

THE great object of a mission is to arouse souls who are sunk in deadly sin, and to lead them to look to Jesus as the one and only source of healing, life, and power; and so we are trying night after night to study the way in which, in the days of His earthly ministry, He dealt with men and women, one by one, and brought them first to feel their need, and then to ask for and receive the blessings which He brings. Yesterday we were thinking of the woman of Samaria. When first the Lord spoke to her of the living water and the gift of God, she knew not what He meant. He touched her conscience, opening up the shame and scandal of her life, and then, though at first she flinched and sought to divert attention from herself, He led her to express her need of the Messiah. He revealed to her Himself, and we believe that He is doing the same to many souls to-day, who are led by missions such as this to look for deliverance from the guilt and misery of sin.

To-night we pass to a different scene, and we watch the Good Physician as He visits a kind of hospital, where a multitude of sick and impotent folk were seeking for relief from bodily weakness and disease. It appears that there was at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market, a pool called Bethesda, with an intermittent spring, round which had been erected five porches, or open cloisters, in which the sick men lay.

The Revised Version omits the words which describe how they were "waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had."

In spite of the fact that the words are to be found wholly or in part in many ancient manuscripts, Dr. Westcott considered that they are not part of the original text of S. John, but form a very early gloss, or note, to explain the Jewish tradition about the troubling of the water.

There is, of course, no contradiction between the scientific explanation and the religious interpretation of the same phenomenon. We may, if we wish, account for the medicinal properties of the mineral waters at Harrogate or Buxton by saying that chemical analysis indicates such and such a percentage of sulphur or chalybeate, or we may say that God's good angels charge the waters with healing virtue.

The latter explanation is not only more religious, but more profound and philosophical, though both alike are true.

S. John does not tell us that our Saviour was summoned to the spot, as He was called elsewhere to heal the sick. He deliberately went of His own accord, that by the display of His love and power He might give a sign that He was the Good Physician, with power to heal both soul and body.

Amongst the sufferers was one who had been paralysed for thirty-eight years ; he had probably been for a long time at Bethesda, but it is a common mistake, quite unsupported by the Gospel, to say that he had been there during the whole period of his disease. In the latter part of the narrative our Lord uses words which imply that his disease was in some way the direct punishment of sin, and so before we think of the miracle of healing, something must be said of the connection between suffering and guilt. Sometimes the connection is obvious and direct. There are certain sins which even in this world meet with terrible and appropriate chastisement. Gluttony, intemperance, lust, and any violation of the laws of health, sooner or later bring suffering more or less acute ; and, if I am not mistaken, there are many here to-night who are conscious that they lack the vigorous health and strength, which might have been theirs if they had never tampered with the body. In some cases, even where there is no sense of wilful and deliberate wrong-doing, we ought

to ask ourselves whether we are doing our best to keep the body "serviceable, tame, and healthful."

There are, again, cases in which the connection between sin and suffering is indirect. The science of physiology and much modern teaching, about hereditary weakness and disease, confirm that terrible sentence in the Divine law that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. It is true that we must balance the second commandment by the great vindication of Divine justice in Ezek. xviii., where the freedom of the individual is shown to be independent of hereditary guilt—but the fact remains, and no one can deny it, that children are born into the world with enfeebled bodies, and both physical and moral weakness, which results from the misdeeds of a previous generation. I insist on this because the thought of children yet unborn may act as a constraining motive when men are tempted to vicious indulgence and lack of self-restraint. But, again, there is much suffering which falls on the innocent. Two great nations are engaged in a fearful conflict, and the suffering falls not on reckless politicians or rulers intoxicated with the lust of conquest, but on the soldiers, who die like heroes for a cause they cannot understand, or on women who weep in their desolate homes for the husbands and the sons who have fallen in a needless fight. The true proportion of the total sum of human misery cannot be brought home to every guilty individual, but we may trace back the whole to

"man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree."

God, who knows how to bring good out of evil, has made suffering, and pain, and death, contribute to the education and protection of our race, and our present concern is with the work of the Lord Jesus, who came to bear our sorrows and heal our infirmities. We have seen that He singled out from the crowd at Bethesda the man who needed help the most, and that no less because in his case the disease was the punishment of sin. So, depend upon it, as He looks in love and pity on this congregation, He yearns over that soul especially which is most in need of His saving power.

Paralysis, indeed, describes the condition of a man, who is sunk in deadly sin. The nerveless limbs, no longer controlled by the will; the languid body, which seems incapable of effort; the mind, so long accustomed to its state that expectation and desire of better things has passed away;—such is the case requiring the awakening touch of the Lord—the Giver of life.

The words of our text are surprising—"When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?"

A strange question. Did not his presence at the pool betoken his desire? Did not his pitiful condition cry out for help? Yes! but the Lord could not put forth His healing power until He had awakened

attention, hope, and effort in one who had fallen into apathy and despair.

There are many cases of apparent physical disease where there is nothing much the matter except that the patient has become so used to his condition that he has lost all interest and desire for health. Sometimes a hysterical patient only needs a sudden shock. Set the bed on fire and your chronic invalid, who has lain there so long, will jump up with wonderful alacrity.

However this may be in physical things, there are many people so much accustomed to their moral and spiritual infirmities that, though they languidly approach the means of grace, and are within reach of complete deliverance, they linger in hopeless apathy, and have no real expectation of amendment. To such a one our Saviour says, "Wilt thou be made whole?" And these words are a challenge to the will.

Sometimes men ask us about these missions. What are you aiming at? Do you desire to convince the understanding, or to stir the emotions? Are you aiming at the head or the heart?

And we must answer, What do you mean by the heart? If by the heart you mean merely the emotions or the affections, I answer, I am certainly not content with that, but in the language of the Bible the heart does not stand for the seat of the emotions—it is the very central fortress of human personality. When God says to the man whom He has made for Himself, "My son, give Me thy heart," He asks for what lies behind

the intellect and behind the affections—the very central self.

Sometimes the will is reached through the affections, sometimes through the understanding, but the preacher would entirely fail if he merely convinced the understanding, or merely stirred the feelings, and failed to reach the heart. We aim at conversion, and by that we mean the surrender of the will of man to the will of God.

Our Lord's question to the paralytic is one instance out of many recorded in the Gospel which show how God reverences the freedom of the will. He does not besiege the heart with irresistible grace. He says of Himself, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." He is not like some intrusive stranger who will force himself on those unwilling to receive him. Passive resistance is quite sufficient to keep the heart closed against Him. It is just this which makes of such supreme importance the spiritual crisis when the soul has to make answer to the question, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

> "Our wills are ours, we know not how,
> Our wills are ours to make them Thine." [1]

The paralytic at Bethesda was one in whose case hope deferred had made the heart sick. He had seen others derive benefit from the healing waters, but the greatness of his own infirmity had prevented him from

[1] "In Memoriam."

seizing the opportunity. He had no friend at hand to put him into the pool, as perhaps there are men and women, round about us now, only waiting for you and me to bring them to the means of grace.

But now there stood beside him a Friend full of pity, full of power, able, when He will, to dispense with any other means than His own omnipotent Word. One thing, and one thing only, could thwart His loving purpose and delay the blessing which He was longing to bestow, and that was lack of faith. There must be faith; the sufferer must at the same time recognize the power of the Healer, and be willing to make an effort for himself.

So the Lord will not work His miracle of grace until He has awakened hope, but when the heart is ready and the man has fixed his eyes on Jesus, the word of power is spoken, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." As He speaks the sufferer makes his effort, and finds that there is power to do what seemed impossible—to rise, to walk, to carry the bed which had so long carried him. And this miracle is indeed a "sign" of grace and power which is triumphant over sin, disease, and death.

The Lord, who bade His disciples preach the Gospel and heal the sick, who promised that they should do greater works than these, is still healing the bodies and the souls of men.

For the most part, in the healing of the body He uses the skill and tenderness of the doctors and the

nurses; He blesses the ordinary means. "He giveth medicine to heal their sickness;" and sometimes, when Christian faith is vigorous and strong, the prayer of faith raises the sick without the use of visible means.

Faith-healing is a fact, but it passes into superstition and incredulity, if those who use it allow themselves to disparage the ordinary use of the physician's skill, or the medicine, which God has provided for the service of man.

So through the Word and Sacraments the diseases of our souls are healed and grace is given, but though He uses the ministry of men, it is the Lord Jesus who alone can quicken, cleanse, restore, and sanctify the souls which, apart from Him, are lost and lifeless.

If there be one here to-night grieved and wearied with the burden of his sin, feeling himself entangled in the hateful chains of evil habit, let him look up, and believe—

> "Jesus ready stands to save you,
> Full of pity, love, and power,
> He is able, He is willing: doubt no more.
> * * * * *
> "Venture on Him, venture wholly;
> Let no other trust intrude;
> None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good."

We end to-night, then, with an act of faith; and by faith we mean not mere credulity, not mere acquiescence in the story of what He did and suffered two thousand years ago, but faith in the living God, in Whom we live and move and have our being, and who

reveals Himself to us as love Incarnate. It is the blessed experience of multitudes that by a lively faith in Him they find a transformation in themselves, and this makes the healing of the paralytic only an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, which makes all believers full of thankfulness and joy.

NOTE.—*This sermon was followed by further instruction on the difference between deadly and venial sin, and papers of self-examination were distributed to those who wished to use them.*

VI

Forgiveness of Sin

"Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."—S. JOHN viii. 11.

WE are considering night after night our Lord's dealings with individual souls as they are recorded by S. John, but it is only right to say that the incident recorded in the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter is probably no part of the original gospel which bears his name. The Revised Version encloses these verses in brackets, and attaches a note to this effect: "Most of the ancient authorities omit S. John vii. 53—viii. 11. Those which contain it vary much from each other." I believe that the fact here stated is indisputable, but I regret that the note should stand as it does without further explanation, for it would be indeed lamentable if any one supposed that there are serious grounds for questioning, that this is a true account of an incident which actually happened, and one which is entirely characteristic of our Lord's severity against sin, while He is full of tenderness to sinners who repent.

The fact that so many of the earliest manuscripts omit the section, and that the style and language differ from that of S. John, is a reason for supposing that the

story is derived from a different source, and incorporated in the Gospel at a later stage, but is no reason at all for supposing that it is not absolutely true. The incident is a little out of place in its present connection, and probably belongs to the close of our Saviour's ministry. We may well believe that it happened on the day of questions, the Tuesday in the Holy Week, when different deputations approached our Lord in the hope that they might be able to entangle Him in His talk.

The Sadducees came with their foolish question about the Resurrection ; the Pharisees and Herodians, united for the moment by their common hostility to Jesus Christ, came to ask about the tribute money ; and then the Scribes and Pharisees brought this poor woman, who had just been detected in a shameful sin. It was not that they had any genuine zeal for the observance of the moral law, but they hoped to catch our Lord on the horns of a dilemma.

The case was clear ; the woman had been guilty of adultery, and it was true that the law of Moses had laid down, at least in certain cases, that the adulteress should be stoned,[1] though the accusers omitted to mention that the same terrible punishment was to be inflicted on the partner of her guilt.

Before we pass on to consider the treatment of this particular case, let us observe that the severity of the punishment prescribed ought to remind us of the extreme gravity of the sin.

[1] Deut. xxii. 20, 21.

Not only the law of Moses, but some heathen codes as well, decreed death for adultery. It seems as though an almost universal instinct, even in savage tribes, has recognized that a sin which strikes at the root of family life, and violates the home, is hardly less detestable than murder.

With that we must contrast the fearful laxity of a decadent society, in which even Christians can be found to advocate or tolerate divorce. It is, indeed, a shameful thing that any one should ask for the blessing of the Church on a fresh marriage union when the forsaken partner, whether innocent or guilty, is still alive.

Sometimes it is suggested that Christian charity requires, that the injured wife or husband should be ready to condone the offence, and forgive without demur a breach of the marriage law.

With such easy acquiescence in the desecration of the marriage tie, let us compare the nobler ideals of the sanctity of marriage expressed in Tennyson's "Idylls of the King." There is nothing more pathetic in English literature than the parting between King Arthur and his guilty queen—

> "I hold that man the worst of public foes,
> Who either for his own or children's sake,
> To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife,
> Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house;
> For being through his cowardice allow'd
> Her station, taken every where for pure,
> She like a new disease, unknown to men,
> Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
> Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps

The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.
* * * * *
I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd, and mine own flesh,
Here looking down on thine polluted, cries
'I loathe thee:' yet not less, O Guinevere,
For I was ever virgin save for thee,
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life
So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
Perchance, if so thou purify thy soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are pure
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
I am thine husband."

I do not say that every injured husband is bound by the Christian law to insist that sin has made impossible on earth the old relationship, but I quote the words to set you thinking of the true ideal of the married life, which is in itself so high and holy as to be best expressive of the union between Christ and His Church.

To return to the scene in the Gospel. Our Lord was teaching in the Temple when they brought the woman, into the full glare of publicity, and under the eye of Jesus. They press the question, "Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou?"

No doubt they expected that our Lord would answer the question, in a way that would lay Him open to attack from one or other of two opposite directions.

If He answered simply that the law in all its terrible severity must be carried out, He would at once

forfeit His popularity, and the common people who were attracted by His tenderness to sinners would no longer stand between Him and the malice of the priests.

If, on the other hand, He said that the law was inhuman and must be set aside, they would be able to consolidate against Him all, who united a nominal respect for religion with fanatical devotion to the letter of the law. They were disappointed of their hope.

Jesus stooped down and wrote upon the ground, as though He heard them not.

There is a suggestive lesson in His silence. Brethren, our Lord's example shows us how we ought to act when some tale of scandal is mentioned with which we have no concern. We should be reluctant to hear of evil, especially evil of that sort which pollutes the mind and defiles the imagination of those, who go out of their way to gratify a vicious curiosity.

But there was another and perhaps a deeper reason for His silence. There are times when, if speech is silver, silence is golden, and it is often in silence that the Holy Spirit speaks to the conscience.

It is well to gather in large numbers at a mission service and listen to the preaching of His Word; it is better to kneel, in silence alone with God, saying, in the words of Thomas à Kempis, "Let all teachers hold their peace; let all creatures be silent; and do Thou, O Lord, speak within."

The interval of silence was not lost upon the woman, but the men, callous and malignant, severe

upon another, ignorant of their own condition, kept on pressing for an answer; and at last they got it in the piercing words, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

In saying that, He did not set aside the severity of the law, but He made it plain that such a law required an unerring Judge and immaculate executioners.

It would, of course, have been a gross perversion of justice to sanction the extreme penalty in a single case, while others, and amongst them the no less guilty partner of her sin, were left unpunished.

But further, our Lord, by those searching words, would set men thinking of the evil which is, in the sight of God, just as serious if it has not involved public shame and scandal. We need not assume that the men who, "convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest," had all been guilty of the same offence. If there was no other secret sin, at least they had learned to be ashamed of the malice and cruelty which they had shown towards our Lord and the poor shrinking victim whom they had brought before Him. They had learned a lesson which we need as well as they—"Judge not, that ye be not judged." Brethren, it is still the fashion to point the finger of scorn at the poor woman who has lost her virtue. Sometimes corrupt society is tolerant enough of prosperous and successful vicious men, while it leaves in hopeless shame and degradation the women who have been the victims of their lust.

Then, if we may attempt to render into English the beautiful words of S. Augustine, "there was left alone Misery and Mercy."[1]

It is difficult to imagine a more miserable object than the woman, who had been brought in her shame into that public place, and had heard from the lips of the Most Merciful words, which seemed to imply that her sin deserved that cruel death.

But if she was Misery, He was Incarnate Mercy, ready and waiting to forgive when once her penitence was proved.

"Woman," He said, "where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

This full and free forgiveness is a stumbling-block to some. They ask, is not this to make light of sin? How do we know that the woman deserved her absolution? We answer, no sinner *deserves* absolution, but God of His undeserved love and mercy forgives sinners who have learned to hate and forsake their sin.

But perhaps you ask, "What proof have we that she was penitent?" We might be content to say that He, the great High Priest, who pronounced her absolution, could not be mistaken—He could read her heart. But there is one proof of her penitence which is obvious to us. She had been brought reluctantly—against her will—into His presence; her judges, or would-be

[1] Misera et Misericordia.

executioners, had been themselves condemned; she was no longer a prisoner, and she might easily have fled to hide her sin and shame.

Other women, detected in sin like hers, have often sought to escape from the world's contempt and the agonizing stings of conscience by suicide, the last appalling refuge of despair; but she, no longer bound with cords, is constrained by a new constraining motive to remain where she is.

She has heard the words of Jesus, and she remains in His presence, knowing that there is the one refuge for a broken heart.

Surely there is no better proof of penitence than the readiness to remain as close to Jesus as we can. If there be one here to-night who has been convicted by his conscience of his sin, let him not follow the Scribes and Pharisees as they went out one by one, but rather let him strive to stay until he hears the words, "Go, and sin no more."

Who would not like to hear those words spoken by the Lord Himself? We may hear them, if we will; for He hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins, and He has said to them who bear His commission, "He that heareth you heareth Me."

To-morrow night, in the instruction to follow the sermon, I shall try to make plain the terms on which this absolution may be had, and how the authority of

His ministers to speak in His Name is derived from the words, which were spoken by our Risen Lord on the first Easter night.

To-night it is enough that we should put ourselves in the attitude of that poor sinner, filled with shame and confusion, but not deserving to escape from whatever sentence may be passed by Him, whose hatred of the sin is only surpassed by His tender love for the sinner, who is content to place herself without reserve in the presence of the one unerring Judge and all-merciful Saviour.

NOTE.—*The instruction which followed this sermon was for men only, on the subject of personal and social purity.*

VII

Newness of Life

"And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

S. John xi. 43, 44.

LAST night we were thinking of a poor woman, who was detected in a shameful sin and brought, against her will, into the presence of Jesus. Then, when she had the opportunity of escape, she remained as close to the Saviour as she could, and therefore was rewarded by hearing Him say, "Go, and sin no more." I hope there are many here in the like condition; filled with shame as we realize that our secret sins will one day come to light, knowing that we cannot escape from His all-seeing eye, we have to make our choice—shall we wait and seek for His absolution, or shall we turn away like the woman's accusers, who went out one by one? Full and free forgiveness—that is the message of the mission, and you who feel the need of it will gladly listen to the instruction after the sermon to-night, in which we try to make plain the way of penitence, and how it leads to pardon and to peace. But for the sermon we turn to

another of these wonderful chapters in S. John, and see in the case of Lazarus a sign of the way, in which our Lord can raise a sinner from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. We need something more than forgiveness. In asking for God's absolution we look not only for deliverance from misery and guilt, we want the power to "rise on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things," and S. John records the case of Lazarus, to confirm our faith in Him, who is indeed the Resurrection and the Life. The other evangelists record two instances of raising the dead to life, but the case of the little daughter of Jairus, or that of the widow's son at Nain, are far less significant than this, not only in the length of time that elapsed between the death and resurrection, but also in the absence of those graphic touches with which S. John describes the growth of faith in the sisters, and shows how they were gradually prepared for the crowning exhibition of their Master's love and power.

We notice, first, that there was sickness, sorrow, and death in the house that Jesus loved, and we remember, for the consolation of mourners everywhere, that these things are no proof that He does not love or cannot help. There may be long delay in the answer to our prayers, not only when we fail in earnest importunity, but when the disappointment of our hopes may be an indispensable condition of God's greater glory and our future consolation.

S. John tells us how our Lord prepared the disciples

for what seemed to some of them a dangerous enterprise. Thomas, ever doubtful and despondent, yet with the devotion which inspires volunteers for a forlorn hope, said, "Let us go, that we may die with Him." This journey to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem clearly marks a crisis in the Saviour's ministry, for the raising of Lazarus, while it confirmed the faith of the disciples, intensified the malice of His foes. We must notice also what S. John tells us of the sisters. He preserves the characteristic attitude of each, in a way that is remarkably consistent with the mention of them in S. Luke. Martha, "cumbered about much serving," "anxious and troubled about many things," was probably the elder sister. Mary "sat at the Master's feet;" she "chose the better part," and S. John in his first mention of her said "it was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment." We cannot linger now to discuss the question whether S. Mary of Bethany is to be identified with S. Mary Magdalene, and with the woman who was a sinner, but at least, for the comfort of all penitent sinners, it must be said that there is, in the nature of the case, no reason why one, who was once a grievous sinner, may not be found sitting at the feet of Jesus and be used by Him to proclaim His resurrection.

We can well imagine how the sisters watched by the death-bed of their brother; full of anxiety, longing that the Master should come in time. They had sent to tell Him. Surely He will not fail! There is scarcely a limit to their confidence in His love and power, for both

alike, when all was over and He seemed to have come too late, used words in which reproach and confidence were strangely mingled: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

They had seen in other cases His power over disease, until they believed that He was all but the conqueror of death.

Martha added, "But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." This was the language of one who could trust Him as an all-prevailing intercessor, but had not yet come to know Him as the very Word of God incarnate.

Jesus saith unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again," and Martha answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." The promise of a resurrection in that dim and distant future is not enough to dry the mourner's tears. We believe it, and yet the king of terrors has not lost his power to lacerate the heart. But Jesus led her on to a fuller deeper faith. His Gospel is not merely the promise of a dim and distant future, for He reveals Himself as having here, and now, supreme and absolute dominion over death and sin. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even He that cometh into the world."

> "Hope below this consists not with belief
> In mercy carried infinite degrees
> Beyond the tenderness of human hearts:
> Hope below this consists not with belief
> In perfect wisdom guiding mightiest power,
> That finds no limits but its own pure will." [1]

So Martha rose almost to faith's unclouded height, and yet she shrank from the opening of the tomb; she knew so well the ravages of death, and how the best features must be hurried out of sight when the work of dissolution has begun.

She needed that one supreme revelation of her Master's superhuman power, which He gave when He spoke with the voice that wakes the dead, and Lazarus came forth.

We cannot linger over every detail in the story, which supplies, indeed, a treasury of meditation, but something must be said about the shortest verse in the Bible. As He stood by the grave of Lazarus we are told that "Jesus wept."

Those tears of Jesus are precious as the guarantee of His perfect sympathy, as the assurance that He did indeed share our nature to the full.

Once more we notice that the evangelist who, beyond the others, insists on the Godhead of the Saviour, is the one to mark the tokens of a true humanity.

The Saviour of the world could not conquer death except by dying, and though, in the case of Lazarus, He was about to anticipate, in some degree, the far

[1] Wordsworth's "Excursion."

greater wonder of His own glorious Resurrection, He shed tears because, even in a good man's death, He saw the result of "man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree."

The raising of Lazarus from the dead after four days' burial is, of course, the most stupendous of all the miracles attributed to Jesus Christ, and it naturally presents insuperable difficulties to those who deny His Divinity. But when we are convinced by many converging lines of proof, and by personal experience of His power, that Jesus our Lord is the Eternal Word of God, the raising of Lazarus falls into its proper place as the climax of a series of mighty works, which He wrought to manifest His glory, that His disciples might believe.

The raising of Lazarus forms the subject of one of Robert Browning's noblest poems, called "An Epistle containing the strange medical experience of Karshish, the late Arab physician."

The poem supposes that Karshish visited Bethany some twenty years after the Ascension of our Lord, where he met with Lazarus, and heard his story. He wrote to his friend and master in the art of medicine and described the strange features of the case. Karshish is half ashamed of his own inclination to believe, and at first attempts to explain it thus—

> "'Tis but a case of mania—subinduced
> By epilepsy, at the turning-point
> Of trance, prolonged unduly some three days."

But he reports—

> "The man's own firm conviction rests
> That he was dead, and then restored to life
> By a Nazarene physician of his tribe."

The evidence, which almost compelled belief, in spite of every prejudice against it, was the strange behaviour of the patient, who had evidently passed through an experience which made him wholly different from other men.

> "The man is witless of the size, the sum,
> The value in proportion of all things,
> Or whether it be little or be much.
> Discourse to him of prodigious armaments
> Assembled to besiege his city now,
> And of the passing of a mule with gourds—
> 'Tis one! Then take it on the other side,
> Speak of some trifling fact, he will gaze rapt
> With stupor at its very littleness,
> (Far as I see) as if in that indeed
> He caught prodigious import, whole results;
> And so will turn to us the bystanders
> In ever the same stupor (note this point)
> That we too see not with his opened eyes.
> Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play,
> Preposterously, at cross purposes.
> Should his child sicken unto death,—why look
> For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness
> Or prætermission of the daily craft!
> While a word, gesture, glance from that same child
> At play, or in the school, or laid asleep,
> Will startle him to an agony of fear,
> Exasperation, just as like."

Is not that a convincing description of the probable behaviour of the man whose eyes were open to the great realities of the eternal world, because he had passed from death to the life which is life indeed?

The conclusion of the poem expresses the poet's own convictions, and is his greatest testimony to the truth of the Incarnation—

> "This man so cured regards the curer, then,
> As—God forgive me! who but God Himself,
> Creator and sustainer of the world,
> That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile!
> * * * * * *
> The very God! think Abib; dost thou think?
> So the All-great were the All-loving too—
> So through the thunder comes a human voice,
> Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
> Face My hands fashioned, see it in Myself!
> Thou hast no power, nor mayst conceive of Mine,
> But love I gave Thee, with Myself to love,
> And thou must love Me who have died for thee!'"

Believing, then, that Jesus Christ both healed the sick and raised the dead, we take His miracles as signs of the way, in which He still is able to heal the sickness of the soul, and raise men from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

It has been well said—there are three kinds of death; one of them is inevitable, but we are free to choose which we will of the other two.

The death of the body is inevitable—to some of us it is very near. We carry within us the seed of a fatal disease, and within a few years at latest every one here to-night will be face to face with death. Let us, indeed, lay to heart the words, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment."

We may, indeed, anticipate and prepare for the

death of the body, but we cannot avoid it. But we are free to make our choice between the death of endless separation from the face of God, and that death unto sin to which we are called here and now.

I do not attempt to dogmatize on the appalling question of the punishment of sin beyond the grave. It is best to leave the words of our Lord Himself to make upon our hearts their natural impression. It is He, the Most Merciful, Who has told us the very little that we really know of the issues of the Eternal Judgment.

If we know not how to reconcile His justice and His love, at least we have no right to explain away His words, "These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

> "Sinners, turn; why will ye die?
> God, your Maker, asks you why:
> God, who did your being give,
> Made you with Himself to live;
> Will you still in sin remain,
> Greedy of eternal pain?
> O ye dying sinners, why,
> Why will you for ever die?"

The one alternative, then, to that eternal and irreparable loss is to make our choice here and now, and determine that we will reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." Let us end with a brief interval of silent prayer and meditation on this choice and the practical duties which it involves, and then hear on our knees the words—

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.

"In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour, but of Thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?

"Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

"Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not Thy merciful ears to our prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, Thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee."

NOTE.—*The instruction was on repentance in general, and contrition and confession in particular.*

VIII

The Broken Heart of Jesus

"But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and straightway there came out blood and water."

S. JOHN xix. 33, 34.

THERE seems to be a special character and a very special importance about all the services on the Friday during a mission. We try to make it a kind of Good Friday; and in the same way we hope that Sunday next may bring us much of the joy of Easter, as we strive to know more of Christ, and the power of His resurrection.

Last night I asked that we should make this day specially a time of penitence, fasting, and prayer. To do so is natural enough to those who take seriously the message of the mission. You remember how we read in the Old Testament of a great city which was strangely moved by a mission. When Jonah the prophet entered into Nineveh, and proclaimed that God's judgment was hanging over it, "the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."[1] Their

[1] Jonah iii. 5.

penitence and fasting were acceptable to God, and the threatened judgment was averted and delayed. God's messengers have just as much reason to-day to tell men plainly that there is much in our modern life which calls for God's wrath and indignation against us, and a mission is a time when we are clearly called to turn to God in weeping, and fasting, and praying.

We too have proclaimed a fast, for however much men may choose to neglect it, the Prayer-book insists that every Friday, all the year round, is meant to be a fast. However much men neglect such obvious duties at ordinary times, no one can enter into a mission seriously, and not acknowledge that he ought to fast as well as pray.

In the words of an old English writer, "Fasting mortifies the body, and tames concupiscence ; it quenches lust, and kindles devotion ; it is the handmaid of prayer, and the nurse of meditation ; it refines the understanding, subdues the passions, regulates the will, and sublimates the whole man to a more spiritual state of life. These are the proper and genuine effects of religious fasting, as they can witness who make it their private practice."

A day like this spent in prayer and fasting must profoundly affect the work of a mission. To some it means the great crisis of their life when they yield for the first time to the claim of those arms outstretched upon the Cross ; to others it means the deepening of contrition, and the resolve to be more faithful in the

future about the daily duty of self-denial. Some have this day sought and found for the first time the full assurance of pardon and peace, as they took home to themselves after a first confession the words of absolution.

And so throughout the day we have tried to keep our eyes fixed upon the Cross. In the early morning we tried to meditate on the words of Jesus in which He anticipated the ultimate triumph of the Cross: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

At the children's service I noticed how the little faces flushed, and some eyes were filled with tears, as they listened to the story of our Saviour's anguish.

In the afternoon we invited both mothers and maidens to think of the Virgin Mother standing beneath the Cross, to watch the crucifixion of her son, her Saviour, her God.

Then, in the outdoor procession through the streets, we tried to bear in mind the way of sorrows, as we followed in thought the predestined Victim going forth from the hall of judgment to the place of execution.

To the women in the streets we spoke of the words He addressed to the daughters of Jerusalem, "Weep not for Me, but for yourselves and for your children." So by all this we do not seek to excite mere pitiful emotion, but to lead men and women seriously to take account of the sins, which crucify afresh the Son of God and put Him to an open shame.

To the casual passer-by we spoke of Simon of Cyrene, who met Jesus, as it were, by chance, and was compelled to bear His Cross.

There are many brought here to-night into strange and unexpected contact with the Cross; let us pray with all our hearts that they may learn evermore to carry in their hearts the image of Jesus crucified.

And now we will not linger over the way of sorrows, or dwell longer on our Saviour's agony, but try to concentrate our thoughts on the opening of the Sacred Heart, and the blood and water flowing thence for the salvation of the world.

We have seen that the Gospel of S. John is obviously the work of an eye-witness. Thus it differs from the other three. S. Luke does not claim to be an eye-witness himself, but only a careful and accurate historian. With a physician's reverence for fact and an artist's eye for the picturesque, he gives us the impression derived from original authorities, but he was not himself upon the spot.

S. Mark, no doubt, gives us the memoirs of S. Peter, and his gospel probably lies behind the historical parts of S. Matthew.

Now, when we come to the story of the actual crucifixion, we feel that our fullest information comes from S. Luke and S. John.

S. Mark and S. Matthew, dependent upon S. Peter, record but one of the seven words spoken on the Cross, and that the "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," which was

spoken with a loud voice. That could perhaps be heard by S. Peter and the rest, cowering in the distance, for they all forsook Him and fled.

I should like to say in passing that I believe S. Luke derived the three sayings from the Cross which he alone records from S. Mary Magdalene; but three are peculiar to S. John.

It is he who records the tender words which were spoken to the Blessed Mother and to himself; it is he who tells us that Jesus said "I thirst," and that He used those words, so full of sacrificial meaning, "It is finished!" But the incident on which S. John lays special stress, as having conveyed some deep assurance to his own mind, is that of the piercing of the sacred Heart.

I have said that the Gospel of S. John is manifestly the work of an eye-witness, and he gives us a kind of certificate of its genuineness and authenticity when he says, "He that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe."

There are three passages in the Gospel where similar emphasis is laid on the personal experience and trustworthiness of the witness—

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory."

His side was pierced and the witness saw the mingled stream of blood and water.

The tomb was empty, and the beloved disciple

"stooped down, looked in, and saw the linen clothes lying . . ." S. Peter was the first; "then went in that other disciple, and he saw and believed."

S. John then gives his own personal witness to the truth of the Incarnation; to the circumstances and significance of the Saviour's death; to the reality and spiritual character of the Resurrection.

Christ incarnate, Christ crucified, Christ risen. That is the basis of our faith; that is the ground of all our hope.

Our concern to-night is with S. John's witness to the death of Jesus, and to the special significance of the water and the blood.

Briefly summarizing the events of the first Good Friday afternoon, we remember that when, with a loud cry, the Saviour gave up the ghost, the crowd soon melted away.

The Roman officer in charge of the execution was constrained to say, "Certainly this was a righteous man."[1] The multitudes returned to Jerusalem smiting their breasts, and then the timorous disciples, watching in the distance, joined the beloved disciple and the faithful women, who had never left the Cross.

Their first concern was to take down His body, but they dared not touch it without the governor's permission. Others were equally anxious that all traces of the crime should be swiftly hidden, and the Jews—that is, I suppose, the chief priests—were the first to go

[1] S. Luke xxiii. 47.

to Pilate to beg that the bodies might not remain on the Cross upon the sabbath. Pilate was astonished to learn —and this throws a fresh light on the horrors of crucifixion—that Jesus was already dead. Sometimes the unhappy victims of crucifixion lingered in their agony for twenty-four hours, and when Pilate was told that Jesus—a strong man, in the prime of life—had died in the early afternoon, he determined to make sure of the fact.

And so the soldiers came, and when they had broken the legs of the malefactors on either side, one of them, seeing that Jesus was already dead, with a rude spear-thrust pierced His side.

It was a brutal act, but its unforeseen consequences are of inestimable value.

In the first place it provides beforehand evidence against the strange suggestion that our Saviour did not die upon the Cross, but that He was carried thence in a swoon, from which He recovered in the cool of the sepulchre.

That notion was, I believe, first suggested by the heretic Celsus, and its occasional revival in modern times is a striking testimony to the strange shifts to which men are put when they wish to discredit the evidence for the Resurrection.

But the spear-thrust not only made certain that He was dead ; it helped to explain the cause. A learned and devout physician, combining his medical knowledge with a Christian's earnest contemplation of the Cross,

suggests that our Saviour literally died of a broken heart.

We often speak of broken hearts, but it is literally true that sometimes excessive sorrow, or excessive joy, does produce a physical rupture, which results in the separation of the blood into its component parts.

So it is suggested that the appearance, not of blood only, but of blood and water, was a demonstration of the fact foreshadowed in the great passion psalm, where the suffering servant of Jehovah says, "Thy rebuke hath broken my heart."[1] If that be so, let us remember that the death of Jesus was not due to any mortal wounds inflicted on Him by those who nailed Him to the tree, but by the accumulated weight of the world's iniquity, which He bore when He trod alone "the winepress of the wrath of God." Here we touch the deep mystery of the Atonement. I cannot attempt to explain it, though something must be said in the instruction this evening of the reasons which may be given for the faith of Christendom, that in some mysterious way the death of Jesus was the one full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the world.

At any rate, let us remember that the fact of the Atonement is independent of the theories which successive ages have invented to account for it.

In the words of Mr. Arthur Balfour, "Any theory of the Atonement, unless it were too vast for our

[1] Ps. lxix. 21.

full intellectual comprehension, would surely be too narrow for our spiritual needs." [1]

It is difficult to demonstrate the logical coherence, much less the completeness, of any explanation of this great mystery, but I know by my own experience, and by the experience of broken-hearted penitents everywhere, that when a man is humbled in the dust, and knows that the burden of sin is indeed intolerable, there is one refuge, and one alone, in which he can find rest and peace.

"Beneath the Cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty Rock within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat, and the burden of the day.

"O safe and happy shelter, O refuge tried and sweet,
O trysting-place where Heaven's love and Heaven's justice meet!
As to the holy Patriarch that wondrous dream was given,
So seems my Saviour's Cross to me, a ladder up to Heaven.

"Upon that Cross of Jesus, mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One, who suffered there for me;
And from my smitten heart, with tears, two wonders I confess—
The wonders of His glorious love, and my own worthlessness."

NOTE.—*The instruction followed on the doctrine of the Atonement.*

[1] "The Foundations of Belief," p. 259.

IX

The Revelation of the Risen Lord

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping."—S. JOHN xx. 11.

YESTERDAY we tried to mark with special reverence and devotion the Church's weekly commemoration of our Saviour's death and passion, and to-morrow we hope to pass from the gloom of Calvary to the joy of an Easter morning. We shall certainly find that those who sow in tears reap in joy, and there are penitents here to-night who are feeling, as they have never felt before, what it is to be baptized into the death of Jesus and to rise with Him to the joy of a new life. Between Good Friday and Easter there is Holy Saturday, with its own appropriate and singularly fruitful lessons for those who will pause to take them in. Bishop Andrewes gives us the true subjects for our Saturday meditations in the course of his incomparable prayers for the week: "Concerning the Sabbath, and the Christian rest instead of it; concerning the burial of Christ, and the ceasing from sin; concerning those who are already entered into rest."

To-night we need not linger over these suggestive

thoughts, for we must anticipate the affections and desires with which we should approach the altar to-morrow morning to greet our Risen Lord, and claim our share in the victory over sin and death.

There is one great difference between the death of Jesus on the Cross and His glorious resurrection from the dead. His enemies and friends alike saw Him die. No human eye saw Him rise. It was in the silence and darkness of the night that, coming back from the place of disembodied spirits, He clothed Himself afresh in the body which had lain for three days in Joseph's tomb.

The death of Jesus on the Cross was a fact attested not only by the timorous disciples watching in the distance, and the little group of faithful friends beneath the Cross—the Roman officer in charge of the execution, and the crowd whose mockery had gradually given way to shame and fear, heard the loud cry with which He gave up the ghost. Last night we saw how the fact of His death was placed beyond dispute by the soldier, who pierced His sacred heart, and the attempt to deny that He really died is too preposterous to require a serious refutation. There is not a particle of evidence in support of so strange a suggestion, and if it were the case that our blessed Lord recovered from a swoon in the cool of the sepulchre, the question still remains, when and where did He die, and how can you account for the conviction of His disciples that their Lord had conquered death?

But while the evidence for His death is ample and

conclusive, what shall we say of the evidence of His resurrection?

That is of a different character, and it rests on the testimony of His friends alone.

"God raised Him from the dead," they say, "and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead."[1]

The question may be asked, why did He not show Himself in His risen glory to Pontius Pilate or to Herod; why did He not demonstrate to the chief priests the futility of their attempt to destroy the Lord of life?

I answer that to have done so would have been alike *useless* and *impossible: useless*, for He Himself had said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead;" *impossible*, for the resurrection was an event in the spiritual order, and spiritual things are spiritually discerned. If our Lord had returned to the ordinary conditions of mortal life like Lazarus, or the widow's son at Nain, or the little daughter of Jairus, then He would have been seen and recognized by all; but His resurrection was of a wholly new and different sort. He rose with the same body, but a body changed and glorified; no longer subject to the ordinary conditions, and therefore only to be revealed to those to whom He willed to reveal Himself.

[1] Acts x. 40, 41.

This characteristic of His resurrection had been explained beforehand. On the evening of His passion one of His disciples, Judas, not Iscariot, had said, "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Jesus answered and said unto him, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him."[1]

So our Lord made plain beforehand that moral and spiritual conditions are necessary before one can know Him and the power of His resurrection. The warning is one which we need to lay to heart as we approach this glorious mystery. We cannot treat the resurrection as though it were an ordinary physical fact, tangible, and to be demonstrated to all alike.

It is sometimes said that the resurrection is the most certain fact in history, and so indeed it is, but it is a fact which is something very different from other historical events with which it has been compared. Its spiritual character and significance are such that spiritual perceptions are essential before one can grasp what really happened, and what it meant for Christ and for the world.

To this we must return to-morrow, but to-night, in accordance with the plan we have followed throughout, we will see how the truth of the resurrection was brought home to the heart of Mary Magdalene. According to S. John, she was the first to see her Risen Lord and Master, and that in itself is full of comfort to loving

[1] S. John xiv. 22, 23.

penitent believers. Throughout his gospel S. John is concerned to trace the growth of faith in individuals, and I hope that the method we have followed has enabled us to share the convictions that are based on the like experience. Who, then, was the woman who lingered near the empty sepulchre on the Easter morning, while the others hastened to tell the disciples of their strange discovery?

Evidently she was one who loved her Lord with passionate devotion. She had watched by the Cross, she had prepared her spices for the embalming of His body, and she was eager to do what she could to show her gratitude and love.

In each of the Gospels we read of a woman who anointed the head or the feet of Jesus, and it is a deeply interesting question whether each refers to the same woman and the same occasion. In S. Luke the story is told with most detail. The feast was given in the house of Simon, a Pharisee, and the woman is described as a notorious sinner, who was forgiven all her sins because of her love and faith.

S. Luke does not mention the woman's name; but in the next chapter he speaks of Mary Magdalene as one out of whom the Lord had cast seven devils.

S. Matthew and S. Mark connect the same, or a similar, incident with the last days of our Saviour's ministry, saying that it occurred two days before the final Passover. They also mention Simon as the host, and they add our Lord's prediction that, wherever the

Gospel is preached, the woman's act of loving reverence shall be told for a memorial of her.

It is left to S. John to name the woman, and when first he mentions Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, he says, "It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair." [1] He describes the incident in detail in the next chapter, and it seems most natural to suppose that each of the evangelists are speaking of the same woman.

The general tradition of the Church has identified S. Mary Magdalene with the nameless sinner in S. Luke, though some modern scholars say that the casting out of devils properly applies to some physical infirmity rather than to the forgiveness of a soul saved from deadly sin.

The identification of the woman, who was a sinner, with S. Mary Magdalene is so deeply rooted in the heart of Christendom that critical analysis would not be likely to disturb it, even if the arguments on the other side were much stronger than they are; and it would certainly be a grievous loss if we were forbidden to think of S. Mary Magdalene as the type of penitents, who show their sorrow for past sin by a life of special devotion to our Lord. It is a further question whether we may identify S. Mary Magdalene with S. Mary of Bethany. Some have felt that the character of Martha's sister, who was found sitting at the feet of Jesus, and

[1] S. John xi. 2.

who chose the better part, is inconsistent with the past of one who had been an open and notorious sinner. But those who have seen the most of the power of grace to transform the life will be the most ready to believe that the two are one.

Thank God, I have known many, who once were stained with very grievous sin, who are now drawn closer to Jesus than the innocent who have never had the like experience of His infinite compassion. At any rate, we may be sure that the woman, who was last at the Cross, and first at the sepulchre, was one who had special reasons for gratitude and love.

If no human eye saw Jesus rise from the dead, there was a gradual revelation of the Risen Lord, and, as Dr. Westcott teaches, the first revelation was the reward of penitence, and love, and perseverance. "Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping." The empty tomb was not enough to carry conviction to her heart, as it had already carried conviction to S. John himself. Intent on ministering to the body of her Lord, she can only imagine that some one, whether friend or foe, has carried it away, and even when the Risen Lord Himself appeared, she was blinded by her tears. It was not till the Good Shepherd called His once lost sheep by name that she recognized His voice, and fell at His feet.

No wonder that she tried to cling to Him once more, as she touched His feet and washed them with her tears, when first He called her to Himself.

But He said, "Touch Me not (do not cling to Me), for I am not yet ascended to My Father."

Certainly it was not that He shrank from the touch of a sinner, but there was a new lesson to be learned. She must lift up her heart and realize that the old familiar intercourse was transfigured by His death and resurrection into something higher, holier, and more abiding. Henceforth she must think of Him as passed within the veil, and she must see Him less with the bodily eye and more with the spiritual sight.

And it is so with us; we must not think of the resurrection as though it were merely a return to the old conditions; it was the beginning of a new life, unearthly, spiritual, hidden with God in heavenly places.

If the revelation to S. Mary Magdalene was the reward of penitence and love and perseverance, let us try to claim it for ourselves. Have we learned this week a deep and abiding sorrow for sin? Let us not flinch from the discovery of our own vileness, if it leads us to the Cross. Have we gazed at those outstretched arms and pierced hands and wounded side, till our hearts are set on fire with gratitude and love?

Then let us linger in the place where we hope to find the Body of the Lord. Great, indeed, shall be our joy if we realize that the Body of the Lord conveyed to us in the Holy Sacrament is the Body of One Who was dead and is alive again, and living for evermore.

The Eucharist is no mere bare memorial of an absent Lord; no mere remembrance of His precious

death; it is the pledge and the means of union with the living Saviour.

Last night, in the instruction which followed the sermon, we were thinking of the atonement purchased by the death of Jesus on the Cross; to-night we pass on to think of the life of Jesus imparted to our souls, because His resurrection is the cause of our own restoration from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

"If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life." [1]

It has been my privilege for many years to belong to the Society and Community of the Resurrection. Day by day we say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Day by day we say the Easter collect as the best prayer for perseverance, so that to-morrow, and for the remainder of the mission, it will be my privilege and duty to say what I can to help you to know more of "Him and the power of His resurrection."

An instruction followed on the sacramental system in general, and Holy Communion in particular.

[1] Rom. v. 10.

X

The Doubts of S. Thomas

"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came."—S. JOHN xx. 24.

NIGHT after night during the mission we have been trying to see how men and women were led one by one to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and the record can scarcely fail to call out and strengthen our faith in Him, for, in the words which stand as the original conclusion of the Gospel, "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name." [1]

The twenty-first chapter is a kind of postscript or appendix, but in the solution of the doubts of S. Thomas and his acknowledgment of Jesus as his Lord and his God we have the natural climax of that long series of incidents, which illustrate the growth of faith.

On this, the second Sunday of the mission, let us briefly trace the steps by which we have been led.

In the case of S. Andrew we saw how the call of a disciple is a call at once to personal devotion and to missionary zeal. In Philip's treatment of Nathanael

[1] S. John xx. 31.

we saw how to deal with doubt. In the story of Nicodemus last Sunday night we were reminded that we need not merely a teacher come from God, but the gift of new life and power, and to give it is the work of God the Holy Ghost.

In the woman of Samaria we saw how a soul is first convinced of sin, and then led to express its need of the Saviour. In the impotent man at Bethesda we were led to see how our Lord requires the exercise of faith. In the case of the adulteress, brought against her will into the presence of Jesus, we saw how the proof of penitence is found in her willingness to stay near Him, when she was free to escape. She stayed in the right place, and at last she heard those words of indescribable comfort, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

The raising of Lazarus suggested our resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; and, as on Friday we stood beneath the Cross and watched the opening of the Sacred Heart, so to-day we have rejoiced in the revelation of the Risen Lord.

There are many here to-night, thanks be to God, who during these last few days have sorrowed for their sin and found their pardon. Many have sought and found the gift of absolution, as they knelt in penitence beside a minister of Christ, through whom God's own pardon was proclaimed and conveyed, and I do not doubt that others have gained a similar assurance of pardon and peace as they wrestled in prayer alone with

God, as Jacob did at Peniel, when he said, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me."

Just in proportion to the depth of our contrition, as we thought about His broken heart, has been the fulness of our joy when, as on an Easter morning, we went to greet our Risen Lord and He was known to us in the breaking of the Bread.

But if I am not mistaken, there are many here to-night who know little or nothing of this intense happiness that fills to overflowing the hearts of those, who know Jesus and the power of His resurrection. Perhaps they notice a new light upon the faces of some to whom the Christian hope has come, while they themselves feel out of it. They are aware that something has been going on, in which, whether through their fault or their misfortune, they have had no share.

It is for the sake of such that I chose to-night the story of S. Thomas. He too felt out of it in that joyous Eastertide. He missed the blessing; "He was not with them when Jesus came."

We are not expressly told so, but I think we are meant to see that Thomas was absent through his own fault. He probably held aloof from his brethren because he had given way to deep dejection and despair. It was not that he did not love Jesus. He had been ready to follow Him to danger and to death. He said to the rest, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him,"[1] and the very terms in which he expressed

[1] S. John xi. 16.

his incredulity reveal the passionate devotion with which he had gazed at the wounds in the Saviour's hands and feet and side, until they had made an indelible impression on his heart.

But as he gazed on the dead body of his Lord on that Good Friday afternoon, it seemed to him as if all was over, and the cause to which he had committed himself had met with irreparable disaster. Some such thoughts overwhelm the minds of many men to-day, when they see the apparent triumph of evil over good. We tell them of the life and death of Jesus, and they answer, "Yes, we know that He went about doing good; there is no one in history for whom we feel a greater love and reverence, but His mission failed, and He is dead." The story of His life and death would be the saddest story in the world if that were all. If I am not mistaken, there are Christians whose religion is entirely wanting in joy and power, because, like S. Thomas in that awful interval, they gaze exclusively at the figure of the dead Christ upon the Cross.

God forbid that I should say one word to discourage the right use of the crucifix. Gaze, if you will, at the precious memorial of love and sacrifice, but never for a moment forget that Jesus lives.

It is right that the crucifix should stand upon the rood screen, or hang beside the pulpit, that the preacher may point his hearers to the Cross; but as we pass up the chancel to the altar it is better that we should look at the Lord in Glory, and be carried beyond the

thought of His precious death to that of His eternal life.

Thomas gave way to deep dejection, and forsook, at least for a time, the fellowship of his brethren, just as there are those amongst ourselves, who hold aloof from public worship and Christian fellowship because they have abandoned hope.

Now, the other Apostles did not leave S. Thomas alone in his despair. They sought him out and told him that they had seen the Lord. It seemed to him far too good to be true, and he rashly expressed the kind of evidence which he would require to produce conviction.

"Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hands into His side, I will not believe."

He was asking for something which could never establish the truth of the resurrection. As we saw last night, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a fact in the spiritual order.

He did not return to the old conditions of mortal life like the little daughter of Jairus, or the widow's son at Nain, or like Lazarus, but He rose with a spiritual body, changed and glorified.

It is true that He could at will offer His body to sight or touch, and even prove its identity with ours by eating and drinking, but He was no longer subject to the old conditions of time and space. He could pass through the sealed tomb, or the closed doors of the upper chamber.

He was willing to give to S. Thomas the very tests for which he asked, but, then, they were not required, for faith cometh by hearing, and the challenge, "Reach hither thy finger," was answered at once by the great confession, "My Lord and my God."

The case of S. Thomas is of extraordinary interest in view of modern scientific difficulties of belief.

There is abroad a wholly erroneous impression that scientific men as such are necessarily prejudiced against belief.

A recent writer, the Rev. G. T. Manley, himself a Senior Wrangler at Cambridge, has published a pamphlet in which he exposes this widespread delusion. He has compiled a list of twelve men, who are acknowledged to be of first-rate eminence for their scientific attainments. No one will dispute the debt which we owe to Newton and Clark Maxwell in mathematics or physics, to Herschel and Adams in astronomy, to Boyle and Dalton in chemistry, to Darwin in biology, to Sir James Simpson in physiology, Adam Sedgwick in geology, to Young in connection with the undulatory theory of light, to Joule with reference to the conservation of energy, and to Faraday. Now, of these twelve, eleven, either by their published writings or by their known character and conversation, were clearly on the side of Christian faith. One, Charles Darwin, was at least neutral. If that great man was too much absorbed in his own pursuits to attend to the evidence which

convinced the rest, he at least has written nothing which is inconsistent with Christian Theism, and much which has enlarged and enriched our conception of nature and of God. Physical science has to deal with the world of phenomena; some would say that it has no concern with the unseen realities which lie behind them, whereas Lord Kelvin tells us that science positively affirms creative power. "Modern biologists," he says, "are coming once more to a firm acceptance of something, and that is a vital principle. There was nothing between absolute scientific belief in creative power and the acceptance of the theory of a fortuitous concourse of atoms."

However this may be, the grounds of our belief in God and the future life, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, are not those of physical demonstration; and there is happily an increasing recognition of the fact that we may safely trust our spiritual faculties which, if they are independent of the reason, are no less an integral part of our whole personality.

The life of Professor Romanes, and his "Thoughts on Religion," edited by Bishop Gore, strikingly illustrate the process by which a man of great scientific attainments was led to feel his need of religion, and that there were other roads to the knowledge of God than those recognized by physical science.

This is not the time to restate the whole argument for the truth of the resurrection, but if there are some here to-night in the position of S. Thomas, let me

briefly suggest to them the way of winning a firmer faith.

Of course there are cases where doubt is the direct result of an evil life. Some need to be reminded that the promise that "they shall see God" is "to the pure in heart;" but I am thinking rather of those who wish to believe and find it hard to do so. To them I would say, do not, because faith is difficult, abandon the worship of the Church. The conduct of his brother apostles to S. Thomas suggests that the honest doubter shall not be excommunicated. In spite of his openly expressed incredulity, they persuaded him to resume his place in their society, and so it came to pass that when Jesus came again Thomas was with them.

In hours of darkness and depression it is worth while to hold on to the highest and the best we know. Hear the words of one who fought his way to a firm, strong faith, after passing through an agony of doubt. Frederick Robertson, of Brighton, said—

"When everything seems wrapped in hideous uncertainty, I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scathless. It is by holding fast to those things which are certain still, the grand, simple landmarks of morality.

"In the darkest hour through which a human being can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain. If there be no God, and no future state, yet even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be brave than a

coward. Blessed beyond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of his soul, has dared to cling to those ancient landmarks. Thrice blessed is he who, when all is drear and cheerless within or without, has deliberately clung to moral good. Thrice blessed because his night shall turn into clear bright day."

Let us at least be true to the noblest instincts of our nature—let us make the most of the example of our Lord. Do not hold aloof from the society of Christians or from the worship of the Church. Strive to be pure in heart, honest in your life, unselfish in your intercourse with others; pray for the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and sooner or later you will know for certain that the Lord is risen indeed, for He Himself has said, "If ye abide in My Word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

NOTE.—*The instruction which followed was on restitution and amendment.*

XI

The Restoration of S. Peter

"So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?"—S. JOHN xxi. 15.

IT has been well said that there stands upon the last page of the Gospels an examination paper to test proficiency in Christian discipleship.[1] It consists of three questions, or rather of one question three times repeated. The Saviour asks His penitent disciple for the gift of his love, and when that is given He restores the pastoral office, which seemed to have been forfeited by his base denial only a few weeks before.

Amongst the innumerable indications in the Gospel of S. John that the writer was an eye-witness, and in the closest relation to our Lord and His apostles, we should attach a special importance to the whole treatment of S. Peter.

The Synoptic Gospels certainly show that there was a special link between S. Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. They formed the inner circle of disciples who were with our Lord upon the Holy Mount of Transfiguration; they were with Him in the chamber

[1] Dr. A. W. Robinson, "Personal Life of the Clergy."

where He restored to life the little daughter of Jairus; they alone were within a stone's throw of the place in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus knelt in His agony. S. Luke mentions that S. Peter and S. John were the two selected to prepare the upper chamber for the paschal meal; but S. John is able to add much that throws fresh light on the character of S. Peter, and while we are trying to study our Lord's dealings with individual souls, we must notice the actions of S. Peter as they are described by his intimate associate—in the upper chamber, on the resurrection morning, and in this final scene of his restoration.

S. John gives no account of the actual institution of the Lord's Supper, though he gives us far more fully than the rest the doctrine of the Person of our Lord, as the Bread of Life, which underlies all true thought about the sacrament of His body and His blood.

Moreover, He gives us the fullest account of the series of events which happened on the night before He suffered. In that exquisite account of the washing of the disciples' feet before the institution of the Lord's Supper, S. John brings out in a way peculiar to himself the character of S. Peter. He, who had measured more fully than the rest the immense interval between his Master's holiness and his own unworthiness, shrank from the acceptance of that loving act of condescension which the Lord showed when He stooped to wash the disciples' feet.

"Lord," he cried, "dost Thou wash my feet?"

Jesus answered and said unto him, "What I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt understand hereafter." S. Peter rashly answered, "Thou shalt never wash my feet," and so drew from our Lord words which reveal the significance of the whole action : "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me."

So, then, this act of loving condescension was not merely an object-lesson in humility, by which our Lord could teach His disciples to render acts of loving service to one another ; we are thus taught that we should be ready to black one another's boots ; more than this, our Lord reveals the whole purpose of His incarnation. It is an acted parable of the Atonement. Every action in that scene is significant. As He rose from supper and laid aside His upper garment, so He had laid aside the glory that He had with His Father before all worlds. As He took a towel and girded Himself, so He had wrapped round His Divine Person our human nature—

> "In it to suffer for our sake,
> By it to make us free."

As He poured water into a basin and went round to the disciples one by one, so He brings within the reach of all believers the cleansing of His precious blood. In a moment the eager and impulsive S. Peter saith unto Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." As when one cries, "Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin."

In the same way S. John brings out the action of S. Peter, as he beckoned to the disciple "who lay on Jesus' breast, and saith unto him, Tell us who it is of whom He speaketh?"

Again he tells us, in connection with the arrest in Gethsemane, that "the servant of the high priest, whose ear Peter cut off, was named Malchus."

S. John, in spite of his special affection for S. Peter, does not omit the story of his threefold denial, any more than it is omitted by S. Mark, whose Gospel has always been regarded as S. Peter's own, but S. John alone gives us the story of his restoration.

In the lesson we have read to-night it is obvious that the threefold question, "Lovest thou Me?" corresponds to the threefold denial, and many people suppose that the third repetition grieved S. Peter only because it emphasized his thrice-repeated sin. No doubt this was so, but there was another and a deeper reason.

We must notice an important point which is, unhappily, lost in our English version.

When our Lord questioned S. Peter He used one word for love, and S. Peter replied with another. The Lord used the verb ἀγάπαν, which implied a higher kind of love than the now humbled and penitent disciple dared to profess. He can only answer, "Lord, Thou knowest that I *love* Thee," using a word, φίλειν, which expresses the intensity of natural affection, but which seems to fall short of that high and discriminating, reverent regard for which Jesus asked.

The second time the Lord and His disciple each used the different words once more, but on the third occasion the Lord used S. Peter's own word, as though He would suggest, "Dost thou really love Me, with all that wealth of human affection which your own word implies?"

The distinction which prevails in the Greek, and is lost in the English, is preserved in the Latin version. ἀγάπαν and φίλειν are accurately rendered by the Latin *diligere* and *amare*, and that suggests a very practical thought. If we have no verb corresponding to *diligere*, at least we have the adjective "diligent," and we may well take notice that our Lord's demand is not so much for sentimental affection as for the kind of love which shows itself in the *diligent* discharge of duty.

However this may be, S. Peter was so far successful in the examination to which he was subject, that our Lord could restore to him his pastoral office. To feed the lambs and tend the sheep of His flock is the highest honour that the Saviour can bestow on His restored and penitent apostle.

It is given still to those who, in response to a genuine vocation, are the ordained bishops and pastors of His Church, and we know that, for the due discharge of so weighty a charge, the first necessity is personal devotion to our Lord. Pray, brethren, for us, His ministers, that we may be able to make truly the response, which our Lord desires that we should make to this searching question.

But there is a very real sense in which the Risen Lord asks of every man, woman, and child amongst us the like personal devotion, and if we can but respond as we ought, we shall have a rich reward in multiplied opportunities of service.

As a mission draws to an end, our Lord seems to ask us one by one for more entire surrender of mind and heart and will, and if we would sum up in a single sentence the characteristics and the motives of the life to which we are called, let it be in the words of S. John, "We love because He first loved us."

It has been finely said that our Lord asks what sometimes parents ask in vain of their children, or husbands of their wives. He asks for that personal loyalty which great commanders like Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon asked of their troops, and did not ask in vain.

It is said that Napoleon himself made this comparison, and he added that Jesus Christ was able to obtain this personal loyalty and devotion from millions, who have never seen Him, while his own influence was at an end with the withdrawal of his visible presence.

Yes, there are ten thousand still in the Church militant on earth, who love the Lord Jesus with a passionate devotion, which ennobles their lives and dignifies their daily drudgery with the glory of the Lord.

If we are constrained to say that we are wanting in this intensity of love, let us remember for our comfort

that our Lord is asking, not for emotion, which may be beyond our own control, but for the kind of love which is entirely dependent on the will. His own test of loyalty is briefly this—"If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

> "We cannot kindle when we will
> The fire which in the heart resides,
> The Spirit bloweth and is still,
> In mystery our soul abides;
> But tasks in hours of insight willed
> Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd." [1]

At a time like this, when hearts are kindled with the fire of God's love and the breath of the Spirit, we need to look forward and guard ourselves beforehand against the danger of reaction. You have watched, perhaps, the process of casting iron. You know how the iron ore is made red-hot in the furnace, and then it is poured, in a liquid state, into moulds of sand prepared to receive it. Then when the molten metal has cooled down, the thing required is found firm, strong, cool, and in the proper shape. This illustrates exactly the aim which we have in view at the close of a mission. We do not expect or desire that men should remain in that state of warm and exalted feeling to which the unusual efforts of a mission have brought them, but we do desire intensely that they should avail themselves of the priceless opportunity of getting their lives into the proper shape, in which they may remain cool, firm, and strong.

[1] Matthew Arnold, "Morality."

Let us, then, briefly call to mind how true devotion to our Lord must be expressed in the ordering of the daily life.

First, if we love Him, we shall make the most of our privilege of access to Him. Prayer must be, not merely the asking for what we want, but the constant and regulated expression of our dependence upon God.

Again, if we love our Lord, we shall love His holy Word. We shall say, with the psalmist, "Lord, how love I Thy law; all the day long is my study in it. I am as glad of Thy Word as one that findeth great spoils." We shall love His people and the glory of His house, saying, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee." "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thine house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth."

But the supreme test of love is the shrinking from separation. A true lover dreads nothing more than parting from the object of his love. S. Paul, speaking of the tie which binds the soul to God, says, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." [1]

This, indeed, is so, but one single act of deadly sin may break the tie, and even venial sins, if we cease to strive against them, may rob our union with Christ of all its power and all its joy. So, then, the warning is

[1] Rom. viii. 38, 39.

clear, "Ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing which is evil."

Last, not least, as the true lover is ever seeking for the closest possible union and communion with the object of his love, so we may mark our growing devotion to our Lord by our ever-increasing reverence and desire for those holy mysteries which He has left us "as pledges of His love, to our great and endless comfort."

NOTE.—*An instruction followed on the Christian's rule of life.*

XII

S. John himself as the Example of Perseverance

"Peter therefore seeing him saith unto Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me."—S. JOHN xxi. 21, 22.

WE meet to-night no longer for one of those irregular mission services to which we have become accustomed during the past ten or twelve days. We return to the regular evensong of the Church, and I hope that you share with the preacher the satisfaction with which one does so. Mission services are all very well in their way: we need something of the sort when we have grown careless and lukewarm, or when we are trying to gather in those who are unfamiliar with our liturgical worship.

But for the regular worship of the Church, for the building up of souls in those habits of devotion which are the preparation for the life of Heaven, there is nothing to compare with the solemn offices of the Church, which come to us charged with sacred associations, and hallowed by the memory of those who, having fought the good fight of faith, have entered into rest.

Praise; thanksgiving; worship;—these are our aim

to-night; but something must be said from the pulpit on the life of perseverance.

We finish, then, our special study of the Gospel of S. John by thinking of the Evangelist himself as the example of perseverance.

In the morning instructions I have tried to deal with the critical questions which arise as to the authenticity and trustworthiness of the Gospel, and I hope I have been able to show that the traditional belief of the Church is not severely shaken by the persistent attacks, which have been made upon it.

Those who have followed out the evening course alone can scarcely fail to see that the internal evidence is very strong, and they will be ready to endorse the words in which the friends and disciples of S. John add their certificate: "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true." [1]

In the last few verses of the Gospel, if not in the whole of Chapter XXI., we see a kind of postscript, in which the disciples of S. John wrote down the last words of their aged master.

As he lingered on year after year, when all his brother apostles had won the martyr's crown and entered into rest, the impression got abroad that the Lord had promised that the beloved disciple should not die. It was necessary to recall the actual words which had been misunderstood. At that last meeting by the

[1] S. John xxi. 24.

lake, when S. Peter was restored to his pastoral office, and the Lord had foreshadowed the method of his martyrdom, the question had been asked about S. John, "What shall this man do?"

Either the Evangelist himself, when his dissolution was close at hand, or his friends just after his death, wrote down, "Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

Let us think of this to-night as the great example of perseverance. There are times when it would seem far easier if the Christian's course were short and severe. One who shrinks from the endurance of dreary drudgery and finds himself left all alone, may be tempted almost to envy the martyr his brief and glorious conflict, and his endless rest.

It was said of old, "Those whom the gods love die young." But the disciple whom Jesus loved had to linger on, and his example means much for us, when we reach that time of life when the natural enthusiasm of youth dies down, and middle life becomes commonplace and dreary, if it is not brightened by supernatural grace.

Throughout the Gospel the personality of the writer is studiously kept in the background.

Dr. Sanday suggests that his singular reticence about himself was the direct result of his special nearness to our Lord. "It is characteristic of the synoptic Christ that He constantly speaks of Himself as the 'Son of

Man.' May we not suppose that the Evangelist, through long and familiar intercourse, came insensibly and instinctively to adopt for himself a similar method of oblique and allusive reference? . . .

"The beloved disciple had a special reason for not wishing to obtrude his own personality. He was conscious of a great privilege, of a privilege that would single him out for all time among the children of men. He could not resist the temptation to speak of this privilege. The impulse of affection responding to affection prompted him to claim it. But the consciousness that he was doing so, and the reaction of modesty, led him at the same moment to suppress what a vulgar egotism might have accentuated, the lower plane of his own individuality. The son of Zebedee (if it was he) desired to be merged and lost in the disciple whom Jesus loved."[1]

Reticent about himself, utterly averse to self-assertion, the beloved disciple says quite enough to assure us that the whole Gospel is the expression of intense personal conviction. He emphasizes the special moments in his own experience, as in that of others, when he saw and believed. Especially he witnesses to the fact and manner of the Saviour's death, and the spiritual character of His resurrection.

When he records the piercing of the Saviour's side, and the stream of blood and water from His broken heart, he adds, "He that hath seen hath borne witness,

[1] Sanday, "Criticism of the Fourth Gospel," p. 80.

and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe."[1]

So when he ran with S. Peter to the Holy Sepulchre, he claims for himself that the empty tomb, and the very position of the discarded grave-cloths, carried conviction to his mind. His quickened spiritual perception enabled him to note at once what for the moment was lost upon S. Peter—that the very position of the cloths lying flat upon the floor, and the napkin which still bore the shape of the sacred head,[2] indicated both the fact of the resurrection and its spiritual character. He saw and believed, even before he had seen with his eyes the risen Lord.

When we pass beyond the Gospels to gather what we may of the after life of the beloved disciple, we find the same retiring character combined with the same fearless witness to his Lord.

Two stories which are told about him by the great Church historian Eusebius are specially characteristic, and they suggest exactly the thoughts I should wish to leave with you at the close of a mission.

When the apostle was a very old man he used to go in and out amongst his flock at Ephesus, saying perpetually, "See that ye love one another." "Little children, love one another."

There was a time when love had not been his most prominent characteristic.

The sons of Zebedee were once distinguished for a

[1] S. John xix. 35. [2] ἐντετυλιγμένον εἰς ἕνα τόπον.

certain fiery zeal, which would call down fire from Heaven on those they deemed their Master's foe; but in old age the zeal was purified from all its earthly dross.

At last he learned to sum up all his theology in words which are the simplest and the most profound, "God is love." So all his ethics were included in the exhortation, "See that ye love one another."

We may well ask, Whence came the change? Where did he learn that love is everything? He learned it where you and I must learn it too. He lay upon the breast of Jesus. He stood beneath the Cross. He took to his heart, and to his home, the Virgin Mother. In drawing near to Jesus in the sacrament of His love, in devout meditation beneath His Cross, in fellowship with the Blessed Virgin and all the saints, we shall draw into our hearts, and learn to express in our lives, the love which unites earth and heaven.

The other story is that of the conversion of the robber. Eusebius tells us that S. John was preaching in a certain city not far from Ephesus. He noticed on the outskirts of the crowd a young man, who listened, perhaps for the first time, to the Gospel of the Lord. S. John loved him, and drew him to repentance, and then before he left the place he made him over to the care of the local bishop to be prepared for baptism and confirmation. The charge was accepted, and when S. John returned some years later, he said to the bishop, "Where is the deposit I left in your charge?" At first the bishop supposed that he was being called to

account on some question of finance, for then, as now, the clergy were sometimes inclined to let the secular business of the Church usurp the place which properly belongs to the cure of souls; but when the apostle made it plain that he was asking for that young man, the bishop was obliged to acknowledge what had happened. They had duly prepared, baptized, and confirmed the young man, but then, thinking that he had received the seal of the Lord and needed their care no more, the clergy had left him to his own devices. Ah! it is a pathetic story, repeated again and again in the frequent failure of the Church to retain the young men. We do take pains about confirmation, and then, too often, the new convert is left alone; the old temptations recur, evil companions reassert their influence, and all our labour is thrown away because we have been wanting in pastoral care when it was needed most.

It was so with the young man in the story, and the bishop was forced to acknowledge that he was dead to spiritual things. He had gone from bad to worse, and had in fact become the captain of a band of brigands. It was then that S. John, regardless of his age and infirmities, pursued him to the mountains, and did not rest until he had found the wanderer, and brought him home.

At the close of a mission the missioner hands over to the parish priest the names of those whom he has been allowed to help in spiritual things. There are

candidates for confirmation, there are lapsed communicants restored, there are wanderers reconciled to the Church, there are children waiting to be taught.

The parish priest accepts the charge, knowing full well that, just so far as God has blessed the mission, his own future work will be more arduous and responsible than ever.

This pastoral care which belongs to the parish priest cannot be discharged without the help of faithful men and women, who will realize, as perhaps they never realized before, their responsibility for the souls of others.

Indeed, we need "a band of men whose hearts God has touched" to carry on and deepen the work which has been begun.

We need devoted men and women for the Sunday schools; we need a good supply of district visitors, who will not merely act as parish messengers and distributors of temporal relief, but who will visit and relieve the sick with words of spiritual counsel, and who will make the prayers of the Church familiar in every home to which access may be gained.

To those who have helped in the mission I would say, as earnestly as I can, that when the special missioners are gone, they must devote themselves with renewed energy to the pastoral work of the Church, in which all who love our Lord must claim their proper share.

Some last words must be said after the Eucharist

to-morrow on the secret of perseverance and fruitfulness. We shall find it in the words, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me."

NOTE.—*After the sermon the whole congregation were invited solemnly to renew their baptismal vows.*

LECTURES

I

The Authenticity of the Fourth Gospel

AS we are trying during the mission to make a special study of the Gospel of S. John, something must be said on the very important question of its authenticity and historic character; so I propose this morning to state the grounds of my own deep and growing conviction that it is the work of an eye-witness, familiar with the scenes which he describes; in fact, of the beloved disciple, who lay upon the breast of Jesus, who stood beneath His cross, and was amongst the first to know the truth of His glorious resurrection.

It is sometimes suggested that the authenticity of the Gospel makes no difference to its value.

Keim, for instance, a famous German scholar, said, "The beauty of the book, its power to edify, its saintliness, none of all this depends on a name." But Godet well replied, "You are deceiving others or you are deceiving yourself; for you cannot conceal from yourself that the discourses put into the mouth of Jesus and the conception of His person expounded in the book have a wholly different value to the Church according as it is the beloved apostle of the Lord, who is giving us

an account of what he saw and heard, or a thinker of the second century, who is composing it after his own fancy."

On the other hand, it is quite possible to exaggerate the importance of S. John, so much as to forget the strength of the Christian position, which would remain if one of its most valued outworks were carried by assault.

Baron de Bunsen was rash to say as he did, "If the Gospel of John is not an historical treatise by an eye-witness, but a myth, then there is no historical Christ, and without an historical Christ universal belief in Christ is a dream, all Christian knowledge hypocrisy or delusion, Christian reverence for God an imposture, and, finally, the reformation a crime or madness."

This is wild exaggeration, for if we leave the Fourth Gospel wholly aside, there remains the testimony of the undisputed Pauline Epistles, of the Acts of the Apostles, of the primitive apostolic tradition which lies behind the Synoptic Gospels, and heathen testimony, such as that of the celebrated letter from Pliny to Trajan, all of which imply that Christians from the first regarded the Christ whom they worshipped as very God.

Christianity was a life before its origin was recorded in a book, and the loss of the most precious of the books might be endured without the surrender of a single article of the Christian faith, but that is no reason why we should surrender the book, without far better reasons than those which have as yet been alleged against its authenticity.

It is admitted on all hands that, since the end of the

second century, when the Fourth Gospel was acknowledged, and quoted by catholics and heretics alike, in all parts of Christendom, nothing of importance was alleged against its authenticity until something like a hundred years ago.

Professor Schürer tells us that most of the difficulties on which modern critics have laid stress were correctly stated by Bretschneider in his "Probabilia," published at Leipzig in 1820. If this is so, it is significant that no fresh arguments of considerable importance have been discovered during the past eighty years; and it is interesting to know that Bretschneider himself admitted that his doubts were removed by the replies which his work called forth.

The arguments against its authenticity are briefly these—

(i.) There are some supposed discrepancies between the Fourth Gospel and the other three—the change of scene from Galilee to Jerusalem; the different order of events; the omission of much that the others insert, and the insertion of much which they omit; (ii.) the difficulty of supposing that the same person could have written the Gospel and the Revelation; and (iii.) the lack of clear and undisputed external evidence before the time of Irenæus. But of course the opponents of the Johannine authorship mainly insist, (iv.) that the author's conception of the Person of Christ differs so widely from that of the Synoptic Gospels that it cannot be the work of an original disciple.

Men's attitude towards the Gospel of S. John very largely depends on whether they believe that this conception of the Person of our Lord is true or false. From his own point of view the Emperor Julian was right when he said, "It was that John who, by declaring that the Word was made flesh, wrought all the mischief."

So a modern writer says, "If Athanasius had not had the Fourth Gospel to draw texts from, Arius would never have been confuted. Had the fathers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries not known this gospel, or not embraced it as authentic, the Church would have remained semi-Ebionite, and the councils of Nice and Ephesus would never have taken place."

To him Dr. Sanday makes an admirable reply. "This does not, indeed, quite correspond to the facts. To make it do so we should have to blot out S. Paul and other parts of the New Testament as well as S. John. But just so far as the reasoning holds good, it is obvious that we may invert it. If a writer starts with a conception of Christianity that is semi-Ebionite or semi-Arian, he is bound, at all costs, to rule out the Fourth Gospel, not only as a dogmatic authority, but as a record of historical fact." [1]

Our conception of Christianity does not depend on the Gospels alone, or even on the New Testament as a whole, but, in the words of Dr. Illingworth, on evidence which is "complex, cumulative, and convergent."

[1] "The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel," p. 29.

"The Christian finds that his belief in the Incarnation tallies with some of the most absolutely certain facts of his personal experience—facts, moreover, which he knows to be typical of countless similar experiences in other persons, swelling till they represent an immense volume of common human thought and feeling. Hence his present belief in the Incarnation is not founded on the authority of a mere tradition, but of a tradition which approves itself to his reason, reflecting on the spiritual experience of mankind—an experience too vast, too various, too subtle, too complex, too heart-felt, too tender, too intense ever to admit of being expressed in any words that tongue could frame. Hence a Christian's present belief in the Incarnation does not rest upon the Gospels alone, but on the congruity of the great Christian tradition with the innermost convictions of mankind."[1]

Broadly speaking, then, the attitude which men take towards the Gospel of S. John depends on their readiness to believe that the living God can reveal Himself to man, and that in fact He has done so through the Incarnation of our Lord.

But since the decision of the critical question whether the Fourth Gospel is really the work of S. John is at least in part a matter of external evidence, we find occasionally that men reach a conclusion which their prepossessions would lead them to reject.

On the one hand, M. Loisy, though he loyally

[1] "Reason and Revelation," pp. 91, 92.

submits to the authority of the Church, is almost entirely destructive in his criticisms of the Gospel, so that it is difficult to see how he can reconcile his faith with his mental attitude.

On the other hand, Dr. Drummond—the Principal of Manchester New College—an Unitarian of the school of Dr. Martineau, has surprised the learned world by declaring himself a convert to the traditional view. This does not mean that Dr. Drummond has become an orthodox believer in the Divinity of our Lord, but his recent work on the Gospel of S. John is of great interest; and his acceptance of its authenticity is of the more value, on purely literary and critical grounds, because his prepossessions were on the other side. His judgment is thus expressed: "On the whole, then, I cannot but think that the external evidence of Johannine authorship possesses great weight, and if it stood alone would entitle the traditional view to our acceptance." [1]

His ultimate conclusion, after careful weighing of the internal evidence, is as follows: "A considerable mass of internal evidence is in harmony with the external. A number of the difficulties which have been pressed against the conclusion thus indicated melt away on nearer examination and weigh down the balance. In literary questions we cannot look for demonstration, and where opinion is so much divided we must feel some uncertainty in our conclusions; but on weighing the arguments for and against to the best of my power,

[1] "The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel," p. 351.

I must give my own judgment in favour of the Johannine authorship."[1]

An attentive reader of the Gospel can weigh for himself the internal evidence, and following the lines laid down in the Introduction to Dr. Westcott's great commentary, he will, I think, see that the author must have been an eye-witness of the events he describes; a Palestinian Jew, familiar in his youth with the geography and the customs of his native land, though he had learned in later life to express his thoughts in the Greek language, and sometimes in terms borrowed from Greek philosophy. Though with characteristic humility his own personality is kept in the background, he claims to be of the inner circle of the first disciples, and to have received special tokens of his Master's love.

The external evidence can only be appreciated by those familiar with the scanty remains of Christian literature between the closing years of the first and the last quarter of the second century. The main facts are these. The earliest explicit and undisputed testimony to the Johannine authorship is that of S. Irenæus about 180 A.D., who distinctly tells us that S. John wrote the Gospel at Ephesus.

Against this testimony there are no early opponents of the Johannine authorship except the Alogi, an obscure sect who rejected the Gospel simply on the grounds of their dislike to the doctrine of the Logos, but they ascribed the Gospel to Cerinthus—in itself an absurd

[1] Page 514.

suggestion, but one which shows that they too regarded the Gospel as having been written in the first century.

Within the last thirty years the case has been strengthened by the discovery of Tatian's "Diatessaron," which is, as its name implies, a harmony of the Gospels constructed about 170 A.D. Of course, Tatian's work under that title had long been known by name, for it is mentioned by Eusebius, but until recently it was possible for those who chose to do so to escape from the obvious meaning of the word. They endeavoured to show that "Diatessaron" did not necessarily refer to the fourfold gospel, and that it was not proved that Tatian knew and used S. John; but in 1876 Mæsinger published a later translation of an Armenian version of the commentary of Ephraem Syrus, in which the "Diatessaron" is embodied, containing indisputable passages from the Fourth Gospel, and especially the prologue.

There is no doubt room for difference of opinion as to the probable allusions to the Fourth Gospel in the "Apologia" of Justin Martyr (150 A.D.), and possible allusions in the Ignatian Epistles and the "Shepherd of Hermas," which carry us back to the beginning of the second century.

It may seem at first surprising that the first undisputed testimony, that of Irenæus, is removed by nearly one hundred years from the lifetime of the apostle, but after all there was one clear link between them, for S. Irenæus was the disciple of Polycarp, and Polycarp the disciple of S. John.

He tells us in the Epistle to Florinus, quoted by Eusebius,[1] how he could recall the very place where Polycarp used to sit and teach, his manner of speech, his mode of life, his appearance, the style of his address to the people, his frequent references to S. John and to others who had seen our Lord; how he used to repeat from memory the discourses which he had heard from them concerning our Lord, His miracles and His mode of teaching; and how, being instructed himself by those who were eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, there was in all he said a strict agreement with the Scriptures.

There was a time when the critical opponents of the Johannine authorship ventured to assert that the Fourth Gospel could not have been written till quite late in the second century. For instance, in 1844, Baur said that the Gospel was not written until 162 A.D., and it is curious and interesting to observe how the weight of the external evidence alone has gradually driven back the date, until now there is substantial agreement between those who allege and those who deny that S. John was the author, that the Gospel must have been written within fifteen or twenty years of the traditional date, about A.D. 90.

Let us conclude with Dr. Sanday's summary of the external evidence:—

"I would not spend my time in refinements upon some of the scanty details furnished by the scanty literature of the first half of the second century. I would

[1] "Ecclesiastical History," v. 20.

rather take my stand on the state of things revealed to us on the lifting of the curtain for that scene of the Church's history which extends roughly from about the year 170–200. I would invite attention to the distribution of the evidence in this period: Irenæus and the Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, Heracleon in Italy, Tertullian at Carthage, Polycrates at Ephesus, Theophilus at Antioch, Tatian at Rome and in Syria, Clement at Alexandria. The strategical positions are occupied, one might say, all over the Empire. In the great majority of cases there is not a hint of dissent. On the contrary, the fourfold Gospel is regarded for the most part as one, and indivisible. Just in one small coterie at Rome objections are raised to the Fourth Gospel, not on the ground of any special and veritable tradition, but from dislike of some who appeal to the Gospel, and from internal criticism of which we can take the measure. Just at this period of which I am speaking these dissentients appear and disappear, leaving so little trace that Eusebius, who is really a careful and candid person, and has ancients like Origen and Clement behind him, can describe the Gospel as unquestioned both by his own generation and by preceding generations. . . .

"A tradition of this kind, so widespread and so deep-rooted, could not have arisen if it had not had a very substantial ground."[1]

[1] "The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel," pp. 238, 239.

II

The Prologue

THE contrast between the Fourth Gospel and the other three is apparent from the opening words.

The Gospel of S. Mark, which is now universally admitted to represent the earliest form of apostolic teaching about our Saviour's life and work, begins with the ministry of S. John the Baptist, and the first public appearance of our Lord, when he was, as S. Luke tells us, about thirty years of age.[1]

It is clear, also, from the Acts of the Apostles, that in the first proclamation of the kingdom of God it was the custom of the Apostles to state only what they themselves had seen and heard. They had watched Him as "He went about doing good;" they had heard His gracious words and seen His mighty works; they had watched Him die upon the Cross; and then they had been convinced by many infallible proofs that He had risen from the dead. At first nothing was said, and perhaps nothing was generally known about His childhood, and about the miraculous character of His birth.

We cannot tell the exact date when the narratives

[1] S. Luke iii. 23.

contained in the opening chapters of S. Matthew and S. Luke were first given to the Church, but it is evident that they must have been derived from S. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin respectively. S. Mary alone could speak of the visit of the angel Gabriel, and her own response to her wonderful vocation. Only S. Joseph could tell of the dream by which his own doubts and fears were removed, and how he had learned that Mary's child was conceived by the Holy Ghost. We need not be surprised that such a secret was jealously guarded, and "that Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart."[1]

When S. Luke wrote his Gospel, and made it his business "to trace all things accurately from the first," the Blessed Virgin had passed away, and her secret might be told to one who, like Theophilus, was prepared for deeper mysteries than those which had been revealed in the primary catechetical instruction.[2]

The Fourth Gospel carries us back behind the beginning of our Saviour's incarnate life; implying, though it does not express, the doctrine of the Virgin-birth, it fixes our attention on the eternal life of God.

Its starting-point is not only long anterior to that of the other Gospels, it lies behind the Book of Genesis itself. "In the beginning God created the heaven and

[1] S. Luke ii. 19.

[2] We know from S. Ignatius that early in the second century the fact of the Virgin-birth was widely known and everywhere acknowledged, but it is not mentioned in the Epistles of S. Paul.

the earth," but before time itself began there was the eternal uncreate essential Deity.

In speaking of the Eternal God, S. John uses an expression which, if not exactly new, was certainly new in the sense in which he used it, and in the rich treasures of theology which his use of it reveals.

"In the beginning was the Word (λόγος), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh."

Professor Schürer tells us that we owe an immense debt of gratitude to J. C. Baur, the celebrated founder of the Tübingen School, who insisted that the key to the whole Gospel lies in the prologue, and that the whole must be read as the illustration of the great thoughts which are there so luminously expressed.

We may well acknowledge this, and yet the importance and significance of the prologue was recognized by the Fathers, and could hardly be missed by any intelligent reader.

The controversy between the defenders of the Gospel and the Tübingen School lies deeper. We may well acknowledge that the whole Gospel is the illustration and development of the doctrine of the Incarnate Word; but the question is, whether that doctrine is the outcome of Alexandrine philosophy and merely human speculation, or whether it is based on facts which the Evangelist was inspired to perceive and declare.

It is quite possible that S. John borrowed his

terminology from the writings of Philo, but if so, the terms are charged with a wider and a deeper meaning.

The term λόγος is used in Greek to express both reason and speech, and there are passages in Philo where he seems to use the term almost in the same sense as S. John—"By the side of the Eternal Philo has what he himself called a second God, who is His Word."[1] However, it is by no means certain that the author of the Fourth Gospel was directly acquainted with the writings of Philo, and there are more obvious sources from which he may have derived his language.

M. Loisy has expressed this very clearly: "The doctrine of the Word in the Fourth Gospel is founded in part on the narrative of Genesis, of which it gives, so to speak, a metaphysical commentary."

"If the Jewish-Alexandrine speculation furnished the author with the term Logos, and in some way prepared his readers to understand it; if the borrowing of such a word cannot be simply a matter of the Lexicon, and if the term carries with it the idea which it represents, it is nevertheless true that the Johannine doctrine of the Logos has its roots in the Old Testament, whether in the wisdom books or in the philosophical commentary of Genesis. The form which it takes in the Gospel is specifically Christian. The idea of the Logos is the point where Apostolic teaching meets the philosophy of the time; but it is to substitute for a notion indefinite and vague, familiar, however, to many minds—a notion

[1] See Sanday, "Criticism of the Fourth Gospel," p. 190.

very clear, which introduces into the given philosophy the consistency which it lacks.

"The application of this idea to the Gospel history becomes, as it were, the scientific definition of Christ the Saviour."[1]

Creation by the Word is emphasized in the opening chapters of Genesis. "God spake, and it was done;" the same expression introduces each successive stage in the process, which we now describe as one of evolution, though in and through that process we trace the hand of God.

The psalmists reiterate the truth, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."[2]

So in 2 Esdras vi. 43: "For as soon as Thy Word went forth, the work was done."

Thus in the Psalms and in the Prophets, and above all in the Book of Wisdom, the Word of God is personified; *e.g.* "Thine all-powerful Word leaped from heaven out of the royal throne—a stern warrior into the midst of the doomed land—bearing as a sharp sword thine unfeigned commandment."[3]

These quotations show that the way was prepared for the final revelation of the doctrine of the Word even in the Old Testament, and it enables us to account for some of the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the other three, when we discover traces

[1] "Le Quatrième Évangile," p. 153.
[2] Ps. xxxiii. 6. [3] Wisd. xviii. 15, 16.

of further gradual development in the New Testament also.

We can certainly find these traces in the Epistles of S. Paul. It is by no means difficult to mark the gradual enrichment and development of S. Paul's Christology in the Epistles, which fall into clearly marked groups. It would be beyond our present scope to do this in detail, but we may take some expressions in the Epistle to the Colossians as being substantially the same doctrine as that of the Prologue. There the Saviour is described "as the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation ; for in Him were all things created in the heavens and upon the earth—things visible and things invisible . . . all things have been created through Him and unto Him, and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."[1]

So the famous passage in the Epistle to the Philippians, which is the starting-point of the difficult but illuminating doctrine of the *Kenosis*, clearly asserts the essential equality between the Father and the Son.[2]

The Epistle to the Hebrews, if not the work of S. Paul, is, at any rate, an apostolic writing of very great authority, belonging to the period between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth. It contains the same doctrine that the Eternal Son is the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the very image of His substance,[3] and one passage in which we can scarcely tell whether the

[1] Colos. i. 15–17. [2] Phil. ii. 6. [3] Heb. i. 3.

expression, the Word of God, is intended to apply to the Word incarnate, or to the Holy Scriptures.

If the "Word of God, living, active, sharper than any two-edged sword,"[1] applies to the word written, it is only because the word written is a quasi-sacramental channel, through which the Eternal Word reaches the hearts and minds of men.

The Fourth Gospel begins, then, with a magnificent assertion of the nature of the Word and His relation to the universe, which is of such a character that the Divine purpose in creation did not reach its predestined end until the Word was made flesh and dwelt in us.

The first verse insists on (i.) the eternity; (ii.) the personality; (iii.) the Godhead of the Word.

It contradicts beforehand the Arian assertion that "there was a time when He was not." To admit this would be to make the Saviour of the world a creature, who might be worthy of love and reverence, but one who could not be worshipped without idolatry.

The assertion that He was with God, *i.e.* as a Person holding communion with another, guards against the Sabellian notion that the relations between the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity belong to their temporal manifestation, but not to their eternal existence.

To catch the full meaning of the next verses it is important to adopt the punctuation, which is given in the margin of the revised version, and which, according to

[1] Heb. iv. 12.

Dr. Westcott, has far the best manuscript authority. M. Loisy agrees that we should read—

"He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything. That which hath been made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men."

All things, then, visible and invisible have their origin and subsistence in the Mind of God, and just as our words are the expression of our minds so the Eternal Word is the expression of the Eternal Mind.

The notion that all things exist in God is not peculiar to S. John; it is, as we have seen, the doctrine of S. Paul in Colossians i. 18; it is closely connected with Plato's theory of ideas, and is in harmony with all sane metaphysics.

Hardly less important than the doctrine of the logos is S. John's use of the terms life and light. The close and intimate connection of the Word with the world which He made lies behind the Incarnation. Nature itself revealed to men the life and the light of God, except so far as they were affected by the blinding influence of sin.

The prologue to the Fourth Gospel takes account of sin, and describes it as darkness.

"The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness *overcame* (R. V. margin) it not."

This shining of the light did not begin with the Incarnation, but was visible (in spite of the twofold darkness of ignorance and sin) through nature, reason,

and the conscience of men. Moreover, it was exhibited by the long line of prophets "which have been since the world began," of whom S. John the Baptist was the last and greatest.

Through reason, conscience, and the ministry of prophetic men, the Eternal Word and Wisdom of God was approaching human hearts all down the ages.

We may well apply to the Eternal Word in this connection what the Book of Wisdom says of wisdom, "which pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness. For she is a breath of the power of God, and a clean effluence of the Almighty; therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her. For she is an effulgence from everlasting light, and an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of His goodness. And she, being one, hath power to do all things; and remaining in herself, reneweth all things; and from generation to generation passing into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God and prophets."[1]

S. John the Baptist is mentioned as the witness of the Light, but from the first a clear distinction is drawn between the herald, or witness, and the true Light.

All points on to that supreme manifestation when the Light, which (through reason and conscience) lighteth every man coming into the world, came Himself in visible form.

We lose in the English a distinction which is found in the Greek and preserved in the Latin. "He came to

[1] Wisd. vii. 25–27.

His own (τὰ ἴδια, neuter) and His own (οἱ ἴδιοι, masculine) received Him not." He came, that is, to the world which He had made, and especially to the chosen people whom He had been preparing for Himself, but they, *i.e.* the Jews as a whole, received Him not.

It is characteristic of the Fourth Gospel that the writer, though evidently by birth and training a Palestinian Jew, has utterly outgrown the prejudices of his nation, and he does not hesitate to speak of the Jews as having rejected the Saviour. To receive Him, and with Him the right and authority to become the children of God, is no longer the privilege of a chosen race, but it is offered to all who are willing to receive Him, and their new birth into the family of God is the result not of natural birth but of their faith in His Name.

So the great prologue leads to the climax: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father,) full of grace and truth.

If up to this point we have been moving in the region of ideas and metaphysics, here we touch solid, historic fact, and the writer tells us not of mere speculations, but of what he himself has seen and touched and handled.

The Eternal Word—co-equal, co-eternal, con-substantial with the Father—has, in fact, assumed a human body, which the writer has seen and recognized as the Body of God Incarnate.

It is here that we must part company with M. Loisy,

whose commentary on the prologue is otherwise admirable. He says, "The virginal conception of the Saviour does not appear to be implied in the Johannine idea of the Incarnation unless one sees in this idea the description of a fact, and unless one connects the description with the very moment at which Jesus was conceived. In this case the force of the terms, excluding all active participation of man in the temporal birth of the Son of God, will seem incapable of any other explanation than virginal conception." [1]

M. Loisy endeavours to show that this was not S. John's point of view, and that in speaking of the manifestation of the Son of God he is thinking only of the public ministry.

But by the time that the Fourth Gospel was written the narratives of the virgin birth in S. Matthew and S. Luke were already widely known, and it seems much more probable that S. John deliberately intended to lay stress on the definite moment, when the Eternal Word assumed our nature in the womb of His mother.

Speaking quite broadly, and in view of modern controversies, it may be said that the doctrine of the virgin birth presents insuperable difficulties to those who regard our Saviour as man, while those who start, as S. John starts, from the idea of His Godhead find that it is entirely appropriate, and even natural, that the Eternal should enter upon His temporal existence in a way which was unique.

[1] "Le Quatrième Évangile," p. 181.

I have dwelt at considerable length upon the prologue, because it provides us with a key to the Gospel as a whole. It gives us that wonderful conception of our Lord's Person and work, which the Evangelist had made his own by many years of devout meditation. In the light of it he was able to select just those words and works of the Saviour which reveal Him as at once very God and perfect man.

The precious words which form the Holy Gospel for Christmas Day are recited in the Roman Church, and by some priests amongst ourselves, at the conclusion of every mass. The old English use was for the priest to say "the last gospel" as he returned from the altar to the vestry, and it is said that the ancient custom arose in the desire of the faithful to hear again and again words which are rightly felt to be the most profound expression of the central doctrine of our Faith.

Let the words sink deep in our hearts, for more than any others they proclaim the Gospel of Incarnate Love.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

"And the Word was made flesh, (and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father,) full of grace and truth."

III

Some Points of Difference between the Fourth Gospel and the other Three

IN the previous lectures we have discussed (i.) the evidence for the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, and (ii.) the prologue, which we have seen supplies the key to its interpretation.

This morning, something further must be said about the alleged discrepancies between the Fourth and the Synoptic Gospels. In the course of the mission sermons, I have suggested several reasons why these differences are either insignificant in themselves, or easily explained by the fact that the writer was removed by an interval of fifty or sixty years from the events which he describes. I cannot attempt to deal with the slight divergencies in detail, which are amply discussed in Dr. Westcott's great commentary, and Bishop Lightfoot's reply to the author of "Supernatural Religion," but there are the larger questions about the historic character of the discourses attributed to our Lord, and the date of the Crucifixion, about which something must be said.

It is often remarked that the Gospel of S. John differs from the rest in that it contains more, and longer,

speeches attributed to our Lord. Dr. Drummond has pointed out that this is not really the case, for, in fact, we get discourses as long in S. Matthew.

It is now generally believed that our First Gospel was compiled by some unknown author, who had at his disposal not only the "triple tradition" or Petrine Memoirs, represented by S. Mark, but a collection of discourses, which are also used by S. Luke, and which some scholars identify with the Hebrew original attributed by Papias to S. Matthew the Apostle. The extent to which these bulk in the First Gospel justify the title given to the whole work, as the Gospel according to S. Matthew.

But the discourses in S. John have a peculiar character, for they are not like the Sermon on the Mount, addressed to the disciples in general, but they are conversations with individuals, or with His intimate disciples, to whom our Lord was revealing Himself, as the Saviour of the world.

Now, every thoughtful Christian must be deeply interested in the question, how far they may be regarded as accurate, and literal, reports of what our Lord actually said.

It is alleged that there is great difficulty in supposing that S. John could have remembered and written out our Lord's own words, after so long an interval had elapsed between the ministry of our Lord and the earliest possible moment at which the Gospel could have been written.

But surely what S. John ultimately wrote must have been in his mind, and constantly repeated in his oral teaching during the whole period, and there are many pregnant sayings characteristic of our Lord, which once heard could scarcely be forgotten.

But if the question be asked, Are we to take the account of the discourse with Nicodemus, and others of a similar character, as an accurate verbatim report of the conversation? we must reply that the trustworthiness of a report does not always depend upon its verbal accuracy.

Take, for instance, two accounts of a great political speech; one newspaper may contain four or five columns supplied by a shorthand reporter, and the other may contain a summary supplied by the speaker's secretary, who knew the mind of his master, and was careful to give all that was really important as far as possible in the speaker's very words.

S. John's account of the interview with Nicodemus may be read in two or three minutes, but it probably represents a conversation which lasted upwards of an hour.

It is, then, a condensed report, and a trustworthy condensed report is best supplied, not by one who takes a few extracts from the shorthand reporter's notes of a long speech, but by one who, by entering into the mind of the speaker, is enabled to give the substance of the whole.

This, I think, will meet the difficulty of those who

say that the discourses attributed by the Evangelist to our Lord bear the marks of the Evangelist's own style. We need not deny that they are like the narrative portions of the Gospel, and like the Epistles, in which he is expressing his own thoughts in his own way.

S. John is not careful to distinguish between the words of our Lord and his own commentary upon them. Thus he passes, without any obvious break, from our Lord's words—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," etc.—to his own great summary of the Gospel: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

In asking for or expecting a verbatim report, men ask for something which they have no right to expect. Our Lord committed His message not to a written Book, but to a living Society, and the Evangelists are those whom the Holy Spirit enabled to receive His words, and write them down when they had passed through the medium of their own personality. In any case, we have to make allowance for the "inspiration of selection," and for the inevitable process of compression and translation.

As regards the last point, I should like to quote some admirable remarks from the "Bampton Lectures" of Archdeacon Watkins:—

"The key to the Fourth Gospel lies in translation or, if this term has acquired too narrow a meaning, transmutation, re-formation, growth; nor need we shrink

from the true sense of the terms, development and evolution. I mean translation in language from Aramaic into Greek; translation in time extending over more than half a century, the writer passing from young manhood to mature old age; translation in place from Palestine to Ephesus; translation in outward moulds of thought, from the simplicity of Jewish fishermen and peasants, or the ritual of Pharisees and priests, to the technicalities of a people who had formed for a century the meeting ground, and in part the union, of the philosophies of East and West." [1]

It is, then, through these characteristic discourses, clearly based on the recollection of conversations at which he was present, that S. John unfolds our Saviour's teaching in chapter iii. about the need of a new birth; in chapter v. about the essential union between the Father and the Son; in chapter vi. about Himself as the Bread of Life; in chapter x. about the Church; in chapters xiv. to xvi. about the Holy Spirit.

These are subjects on which we shall have to dwell a little longer during the remainder of the mission, but one point remains for our consideration to-day, because it has been made a serious objection against the truth and accuracy of the Fourth Gospel.

We must admit that there is a real divergence between S. John and the Synoptists as to the Last Supper, and the date of the Crucifixion.

They agree as to the day of the week. The Last

[1] Archdeacon Watkins, "Bampton Lectures," p. 426.

Supper was eaten on Thursday evening, but was it the day of the Passover, and was the Last Supper a Paschal meal? According to Jewish reckoning, the evening of Thursday would be the beginning of Nisan 15, and then the Crucifixion would take place after the Passover.

But in S. John xiii. 1 we are expressly told that the Last Supper took place before the Feast of the Passover, and, if so, the Crucifixion took place at the time devoted to the slaughter of the Paschal lamb.

Admitting that the attempts to bring his narrative into harmony with that of the Synoptists have failed, it does not follow that the Synoptists are right, and the Fourth Gospel wrong.

Where discrepancies exist, we must not imagine that it is a case of three authorities against one, for the Synoptic tradition is really one, and the choice between that one and the Fourth Gospel is, at least, an open question. But, in fact, it may be said (i.) that the Synoptic narrative is not consistent with itself, and (ii.) that S. John's account is in some ways corroborated by S. Paul.

This point is brought out clearly by Dr. Sanday,[1] but it is enough to mention here that in S. Mark xiv. 2 we are told that it was determined not to arrest Jesus during the Feast; whereas, if the Synoptic tradition was correct, the arrest took place on the day itself, and after the Feast had been eaten.

The chronology of S. John is consistent with S.

[1] "The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel," pp. 150–155.

Paul's bold identification of Christ with the Paschal lamb, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast."

To my mind these discrepancies between the Gospels are of very little consequence, and the attempt to construct an exact harmony is by no means the most fruitful method of study. There is much that I should wish to leave an open question, but if the divergence is pressed to the point of saying that one of our rival authorities is inaccurate and unhistoric, I should insist that the claim of the Fourth Gospel to be the work of a trustworthy witness, in all matter of fact, is at least as strong as that of the other three.

Here we must close our critical study of the Fourth Gospel, for, at any rate during a mission, we are much more concerned with the appeal to the conscience and the will, which I hope may come through the evening mission sermons and our early morning meditations, but it may be well to quote the words of a great English scholar and Bishop, who knew well how to meet and vanquish the opponents of the Gospel on their own ground.

In the *Expositor* for January, February, and March, 1890, there appeared three lectures by Bishop Lightfoot, which he had revised just before he passed away. Like S. Bede at Jarrow, or the Evangelist himself at Ephesus, the great Christian scholar passed away surrounded by a group of disciples, who asked for his last words about the Gospel of the Incarnate Word. This was the conclusion of his lectures:—

"I have already taken up more time than I had intended, and yet I feel that very much has been left unsaid. But I venture to hope that certain lines of investigation have been indicated, which, if carefully followed out, can only lead to one result. Whatever consequences may follow from it, we are compelled, on critical grounds, to accept the Fourth Gospel as the work of John the son of Zebedee."

"One word more," says the Bishop, "and I conclude. I have treated this as a purely critical question, carefully eschewing any appeal to Christian instincts—as a critical question I wish to take a verdict upon it. But, as I would not have you think that I am blind to the theological issues directly or indirectly connected with it, I will close with this brief confession of faith. I believe from my heart that the truth which the Gospel more especially enshrines, the truth that the Word Incarnate, the manifestation of the Father to mankind, is the one lesson which, duly apprehended, will do more than all our feeble efforts to purify and elevate human life here by imparting to it hope and light and strength, the one study which alone can fitly prepare us for a joyful immortality hereafter."

MEDITATIONS

I

The Bread of Life

"I am the Bread of Life."—S. JOHN vi. 35.

LET us place ourselves in the Presence of God, remembering such words as these—

i. "Draw off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

ii. "We wait for Thy loving kindness in the midst of Thy Temple."

iii. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer."

Let us implore the help of the Holy Spirit, saying—

"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire," etc., etc.

We have seen that the Gospel of S. John records seven great instances of self-assertion on the part of our Lord Jesus Christ; that He makes claims for Himself that could not be made by any mere human teacher without intolerable presumption; and that these claims are the strongest possible confirmation of the great dogmatic

statements of the prologue, that the Word was God; and that the Word was made flesh and dwelt in us.

In order to impress these all-important truths upon our hearts and minds we will try, in the early mornings after the Eucharist, to meditate upon the great sayings one by one.

This morning, by way of prelude, let us form a mental picture of our Lord teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. He is surrounded by His intimate and devout disciples, but with them there is a mixed multitude, drawn, partly by curiosity, and partly by the expectation of some immediate temporal benefit. Their minds are full of that wonderful gathering beyond the lake, where He had made bountiful provision for the wants of five thousand men, beside the women and children, with five barley loaves and two little fishes.

It was a "mighty work," calculated to arrest the attention of the multitude, but it was also a "sign," charged with a deeper meaning for those whose eyes were open.

Our Lord rebukes those who sought Him, not because they saw the meaning of the sign, but because they ate of the loaves and were filled.

Then, with a reference to Moses and the manna in the wilderness, He reveals Himself as the Bread of God, "which cometh down from Heaven and giveth life unto

the world." Then, when they say, "Lord, evermore give us this Bread," Jesus saith unto them, "I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

The words suggest three points for meditation—

I

Our Lord claims to be the "source and stay of all creation." As bread is the staff of life, so man's true life depends on union with God. In Him we live and move and have our being; separated from Him we perish. Let us say with the psalmist, "The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand and fillest all things living with plenteousness."[1] Let us pause and remember in silence our entire dependence upon God. . . .

Let us turn to Him and say—

> "Soul of our souls and safeguard of the world,
> Sustain, Thou only canst, the sick of heart,
> Restore their languid spirits, and recall
> Their lost affections unto Thee and Thine."[2]

II

Consider how the Eternal Word brings Himself within our reach by the Holy Incarnation, and by the

[1] Ps. cxlv. 15, 16.
[2] Wordsworth, "Excursion," Bk. IV.

gift of His precious Body and Blood in the blessed Eucharist.

Let us say with the utmost reverence and fervent love: "O sacred banquet wherein Christ is received, the memory of His passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given unto us."

> "Bread of Heaven, on Thee we feed,
> For Thy Flesh is meat indeed;
> Ever may our souls be fed
> With this true and living Bread."

III

Let us form some practical resolutions as to our use of Holy Communion.

i. We will never willingly be absent from the Lord's Table on the Lord's Day, and we will use to the full our privilege of still more frequent access to this holy feast.

ii. We will pray for all careless, lapsed, or infrequent communicants that they may be brought back in penitence, and faith, and love.

O God, Who in this wonderful Sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion, grant us so to venerate the sacred mysteries of Thy Body and Blood, that we may evermore perceive within ourselves the fruit of that

redemption, which Thou hast purchased for us, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God.

iii. We will be strict with ourselves in our preparation for our own communion, that we may come,

α. With a full assurance that our sins are forgiven.

β. With a deep sense of the greatness of the Gift we seek.

γ. With some special intention of prayer and thanksgiving.

II

The Light of the World

"I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—S. JOHN viii. 12.

"Come, Holy Ghost," etc.

AGAIN we place ourselves in the Presence of God; imploring the help of the Holy Spirit that we may meditate on another of those great claims, attributed to our Lord in the Gospel of S. John.

In our prelude let us recall Mr. Holman Hunt's great picture of the Light of the World. We gaze upon our Saviour standing at the door, with the lantern in His hand, offering the light of life to those who will open the door of the heart.

He will not force an entrance where He is not welcome. He is not like some intrusive stranger who insists upon admission. He says of Himself, "Behold I stand at the door and knock"! Passive resistance is enough to keep Him outside the human hearts, which He has made for Himself, and wherein He longs to rest. Let us pray for grace to welcome the Light.

O Thou true Light that lightest every man that cometh into the world, do Thou in Thy mercy touch the hearts and lighten the understandings of us, who kneel before Thee in this place; dispel the twofold darkness of ignorance and sin, that we may henceforth walk in the light, and manifest to others the signs of Thine illumination, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I

Let us consider the twofold darkness of ignorance and sin, which has covered the world since man lost that privilege of familiar intercourse with God, for which he was created, and which he enjoyed in the days of innocence.

S. Paul speaks of the widespread darkness and its cause. "The invisible things of God might have been clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made . . . but because men glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks, they became vain in their reasonings and their senseless heart was darkened."[1]

Our personal experience corresponds with that of the human race; we know the intimate connection between spiritual perception and holiness of life.

[1] Romans i. 20, 21.

If the will is entangled in worldliness or sensuality, faith is dimmed, the power of knowing God is lost, or weakened, and the heavenly vision once lost is not easily recovered. So it has been truly said—

"Of course the blinding influence of such things as indolence, or sensuality, or vanity, or pride, or avarice, or deliberate selfishness in any form, is too plainly obvious to be denied. But what is denied, as we have already seen, is that a measure of their blinding influence may continue long after its causes have been practically overcome; and consequently that a penitential process, more profound even than moral amendment, is in all cases necessary for the restoration of the spiritual vision."[1]

II

Let us consider how Christ is the light of the world. ~~In the prologue~~ S. John tells us "that the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended [R.V. margin, 'overcame'] it not."

The reference clearly is not primarily to the historic manifestation of the Word at the Incarnation, but to His illumination of the long line of prophets, which have been since the world began. That was the true Light

[1] Illingworth, "Bampton Lectures," chap. v. p. 127.

which lighteth every man coming into the world. All beauty, truth and holiness, within and without the chosen race, were but a reflection of the Light of the World.

Let us try to trace all beauty, truth, and holiness to its source.

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

"We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from Thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

"But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock Thee, when we do not fear.
But help Thy foolish ones to bear;
Help Thy vain worlds to bear Thy light."[1]

III

That light may shine into some darkened chamber, curtains must be drawn back, windows cleansed or thrown open; so let us endeavour to open our hearts, remembering the words, "The entrance of Thy word giveth light;" "Send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me."

[1] Tennyson, "In Memoriam."

To-day we must conclude our meditation with some practical resolution about the duty of self-examination. If it has never yet been done, we need to make a thorough and careful review of our whole past life, in order that we may discover not only acts of wilful sin and disobedience, but those roots from which they spring.

We must test ourselves by the Divine law, revealed on Sinai, illuminated by the life of Jesus and by the Sermon on the Mount, and brought home to our consciences by the power of the Holy Ghost.

If the duty of self-examination has not been neglected in the past, if old sins have been detected, forsaken, confessed and absolved, still we need a daily watchfulness that the inevitable stains of ~~venial~~ sin may be washed away by the continual application of the precious blood of Christ.

~~Let us say earnestly—~~

"Try me, O God, and examine my ways. Look well if there be any wickedness in me."

III

The Door of the Sheep

"I am the Door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the Door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."—S. JOHN x. 7, 8, 9.

"Come, Holy Ghost," etc.

AGAIN we place ourselves at the feet of Jesus and hear Him make a vast and exclusive claim. If He said these words, and there is no reason to doubt it, we are not able to regard Him merely as one among many teachers, who were sent from God.

If the words are not true, the intolerable presumption of the claim deprives Him of the right to be regarded as worthy of our confidence and love.

With a full sense of what the words imply let us say—

O Lord Jesus Christ, we praise Thee, we bless Thee, we acknowledge Thee to be the Door of access to the Father, and we pray for grace to enter in and find our rest and safety in Thy Name, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

I

Let us consider first the allegory of the sheepfold, for in the tenth chapter of S. John our Lord is using two distinct, though closely related illustrations. At one time He is the door, through which the shepherd enters ; at another He is Himself the good shepherd.

We must try to picture an eastern sheepfold, in which the flocks of several shepherds are placed for security. Within the enclosure, surrounded by a wall, the porter guards the sheep at night. Thieves and robbers, endeavouring to steal or destroy, would break in some other way, but the shepherd, when he comes to call his sheep and lead them forth, approaches by the door, and to him the porter openeth.

The sheep pass in and out through the door, which is the one legitimate entrance, and on that, in the first allegory, all the stress is laid.

So we meditate on our Lord Jesus Christ as the Door. The word stands first for security. Within, the sheep are safe ; without, are thieves and robbers. We, "the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand," are exposed to danger of every kind, and we greatly need to enter into the place, where He is the pledge of security.

II

Our Lord promises that he that enters in by the door shall go in and out and find pasture.

(*a*) To enter through Christ into the Catholic Church is not only to be safe, it is to have permanent freedom of access to the Father. So the Apostle reminds us.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which He dedicated for us, a new and living way through the veil, that is to say His flesh, and having a great high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."[1]

(*b*) Within the sheepfold, guarded by the Door, there is not only freedom of entrance and exit for the sheep who follow the true Shepherd, there is also the provision of abundant pasture.

Let us meditate, then, upon the safety and abundant provisions within our reach, if we are indeed the true sheep of His flock. He feeds us by His word and by His holy sacraments.

In the words of Thomas à Kempis—

"I feel that two things above all are necessary for me in this life, without which this miserable life would

[1] Heb. x. 19-22.

be to me unbearable. Detained in the prison of this body I confess that I need two things, food that is, and light. Thou hast given to me in my weakness, Thy sacred Body for the refreshment of my mind and body, and Thou hast ordained Thy Word as a lamp to my feet. Without these two I cannot live ; for the Word of God is the light of the soul, but the sacrament is the bread of life. The one table is that of the sacred altar, having the holy bread that is the precious Body of Christ, the other is the table of the Divine law, containing holy doctrine building up a right faith, and leading firmly on to the things within the veil where is the Holy of Holies." [1]

III

Let us resolve—

1. To live and die within the security of that fold, of which Christ is the Door.

2. To make full and thankful use of the food and light, afforded by the Holy Sacraments and by His Holy word.

3. To do what in us lies to draw others to enter through the Door, and live in union with the flock of Christ.

[1] "Imitation of Christ."

IV

The Good Shepherd

"I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep."—S. JOHN x. 11.

"Come, Holy Ghost," etc.

OF all the titles which our Blessed Lord claims for Himself none is more precious, none is more significant than this.

In the Old Testament the relation between God and His own elect is often so expressed.

The psalmist taught Israel to say—

"The Lord is my Shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort."[1]

"Hear, O Thou Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep: show Thyself also, Thou that sittest upon the cherubims."[2]

"I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; O seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments."[3]

[1] Ps. xxiii. 1, 2. [2] Ps. lxxx. 1. [3] Ps. cxix. 176.

The prophets looked forward to a fuller manifestation of the same protecting love. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs in His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." [1]

When Ezekiel rebukes the false shepherds, who harass and scatter the flock, he adds: "Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out My sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." [2]

So in looking forward to the mission we have prayed, and let us say once more—

"O Lord Jesu Christ, Thou great Shepherd of the sheep, Who came to seek and to save that which was lost, bless the efforts which Thy servants are making to bring souls home to Thyself; arouse the careless; recover the fallen; restore the penitent; bring back the wanderers into Thy fold, for the glory of Thy Name, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost."

[1] Isa. xl. 11. [2] Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 12.

II

When our Lord calls Himself the Good Shepherd, He claims nothing less than equality—identity with the Shepherd of Israel of Whom psalmists sang, Whom the prophets foretold, and for Whom saints had yearned.

From the first the title has been dearer than any other to Christian hearts.

In the catacombs at Rome one may still see the rude figures of the Good Shepherd, by which disciples in days of persecution expressed their faith, and love, and trust, long before they ventured to depict the figure of our Lord upon the cross, or the Holy Child in the arms of the Madonna. His strength and tenderness were represented in the figure who carried the helpless lamb upon his shoulder.

So many a Christian child has learned his first ideas of the Redeemer's love as he listened to his mother telling him the story of the Good Shepherd, Who gave His life for the sheep.

Let us briefly meditate on some of the characteristics which are so expressed.

1. His knowledge of the sheep and individual love—

"He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."

2. His example—

"He goeth before them. . . . My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me."

3. His self-sacrifice—

"I lay down My life for the sheep."

4. His promise of protection—

"They shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand."

5. His ultimate purpose for the whole human race—

"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd."

III

Let us acknowledge our past wilfulness and our present need, as we seek His grace, saying—

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to His own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."[1]

"I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: O seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments.'[2]

[1] Isa. liii. 6. [2] Ps. cxix. 176.

V

The Attraction of the Cross

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself."—S. JOHN xii. 32.

"Come, Holy Ghost," etc.

LET us contemplate the Cross of Christ.

We can picture the mocking crowd; the callous soldiers; the malicious priests; the timorous disciples watching in the distance; the little group of faithful women, with the blessed Mother and S. John; the malefactors on either side, and Jesus in the midst.

To Him we say—

"O my Saviour lifted
From the earth for me,
Draw me in Thy mercy
Nearer unto Thee.

"Fix my earthbound longings,
Melt this heart of ice,
As I scan the marvels
Of Thy sacrifice.

"Lord, Thine arms are stretching
Ever far and wide,
To enfold Thy children
To Thy loving side.

"And I come, O Jesus,
Dare I turn away?
No, Thy love hath conquered,
And I come to-day.

"Bringing all my burdens,
Sorrow, sin, and care;
At Thy feet I lay them,
And I leave them there."

I

The words on which we meditate to-day, though not, like the rest, commencing with the words "I am," are no less an assertion of the same great claim; and they remind us that the death of Jesus on the Cross is the climax of His witness to the world.

This is Friday, and at each of our services to-day we concentrate our thoughts on that, which is most fitted to kindle in our hearts sorrow for our sins, and devotion to our Lord.

The preaching of the Cross cannot fail, for our Lord's own promise has been fulfilled at all times and in every place, where human hearts, grieved and weary with the burden of their sins, have heard the story of His love.

Let us try to understand the secret of the attractive power of the Cross.

(i.) The cross is the exhibition of the perfection of human love.

We cannot fail to acknowledge that there is nothing so good and beautiful in the world as the spectacle of one who will do or suffer anything for the sake of his friends; and the Cross exhibits this unselfishness carried to the highest conceivable point.

(ii.) The cross exhibits not merely the perfection of human love; it reveals to man the depth and intensity of the love of God.

The human heart craves for the discovery of the best that it knows in human nature, in God Himself, and "in the Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement, whatever else they mean, we find a sanction for the thought that in the nature of God there is a capacity of condescending love, of boundless pity and forgiveness, yea, with reverence be it said, of pain, and sorrow, and sacrifice for the salvation of finite souls, a capacity which could only be realized through the sorrow and sin of the world." [1]

II

Let us consider how far we ourselves have already yielded to the attractive power of the Cross. Thomas à Kempis tells us "that the lovers of the Cross of Jesus are few."

[1] E. Caird, "Fundamental Ideas," pp. 162-3.

"Jesus hath now many lovers of His heavenly kingdom, but few bearers of His Cross. He hath many desirous of consolation, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of His table, but few of His abstinence. All desire to rejoice with Him; few are willing to endure anything for Him. Many follow Jesus even to the breaking of bread; but few to the drinking of the cup of His passion. Many reverence His miracles, few follow the ignominy of His cross." Let us make acts of penitence and shame for our past ingratitude and lack of devotion to the Cross.[1]

III

Let us resolve to spend this day, and, so far as possible, every Friday in the Christian year, as a day of fasting, penitence, and prayer, and to-day let us ask especially that in the preaching of the Cross the promise of our Lord may be fulfilled, and that He may draw all men to Himself. As we tread the royal way of the Holy Cross let us give thanks—

"For in the Cross is salvation; in the Cross is life; in the Cross is protection against our enemies; in the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness; in the Cross is strength of mind; in the Cross joy of spirit; in the

[1] "Imitation of Christ."

Cross the height of virtue; in the Cross perfection of sanctity. There is no hope of salvation of the soul, nor hope of everlasting life but in the Cross." [1]

"Almighty God, we beseech Thee graciously to behold this Thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the Cross, Who now liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen."

"O Saviour of the world, who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us; save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord."

[1] "Imitation of Christ."

VI

Death and Resurrection

"I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die."—S. JOHN xi. 25.

"Come, Holy Ghost," etc.

AGAIN we try to place ourselves in spirit at Bethany, just outside the house of Martha, where Jesus drew out the faith of the sisters and taught them to regard Him, not merely as their friend, whose powerful intercession could arrest the progress of disease, but as the conqueror of death.

As yesterday we thought of the Saviour's precious death, and to-morrow we shall be thinking of His own glorious resurrection from the dead, so to-day we think of His power to reach even the souls in paradise.

Let us pray

Almighty God, with Whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with Whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; we give Thee hearty thanks that it hath pleased Thee to deliver our brethren

out of the miseries of this sinful world ; beseeching Thee that it may please Thee, of Thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and to hasten Thy kingdom ; that we with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thy eternal and everlasting glory ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I

Let us consider our Lord's claim to be the resurrection, and the life, with power to raise the dead. He proved His power in the case of the little daughter of Jairus ; in that of the widow's son at Nain ; and above all in that of Lazarus ; but He did not act in any case until He had elicited faith. Like Martha, let us say, "I have believed that Thou art the Christ the Son of God, even He that cometh into the world."

II

Let us think of the sisters' joy at that wonderful return from death to life, and recall Tennyson's exquisite lines—

> "When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
> And home to Mary's house return'd,
> Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
> To hear her weeping by his grave?

"'Where wert thou, brother, those four days?'
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

"From every house the neighbours met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

"Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not; or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

"Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits.
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And He that brought him back is there.

"Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face
And rests upon the Life indeed."[1]

III

Let us rejoice in souls lately dead in trespasses and sins, raised by the power of God to newness of life; but, like Mary in the poet's picture, we turn from the living brothers to Him Who is the Life indeed.

Let us rejoice in the knowledge—

i. That His love and power can reach beyond the grave.

ii. That He has quickened those who were dead in trespasses and sins.

[1] "In Memoriam," xxxi., xxxii.

iii. That those who sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His great mercy, begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

"And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is even in Thee."

Let us pray

Almighty God, who through Thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; we humbly beseech Thee that, as by Thy special grace preventing us, Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by Thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

O Lord of life, we praise and bless Thy Holy Name for all those whom Thou hast raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, and we pray Thee to keep them and us in Thy love and peace.

Let us pray for the dead in Christ.

V. Grant them, O Lord, eternal rest.

R. And let light perpetual shine upon them.

O Lord, the maker and redeemer of all believers, grant to the faithful departed all the unsearchable benefits of Thy Son's passion, that in the day of His appearing they may be manifest as Thy children; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

VII

Heaven

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."—S. JOHN xiv. 6.

LET us contemplate our Lord, and His disciples, in the upper chamber at Jerusalem.

It is the night before He suffered. He has washed His disciples' feet in token of His cleansing them from the stains and guilt of sin. He has fed them for the first time with His own Body and His most precious Blood. He goes on to prepare them for the approaching separation by telling them of Heaven.

Let us lift up our hearts and think of that eternal home.

"O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country,
That eager hearts expect!
Jesu, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest,
Who art, with God the Father,
And Spirit, ever blest."

I

To one at least of His disciples it was difficult to realize what this could mean. S. Thomas, doubtful and despondent, yet full of love and zeal, expresses what many after him have felt—

"Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how know we the way?"

To us, in hours of despondency, it is difficult to grasp the reality of another world and the hope of a future meeting with those we love. Let us make the most of the answer of our Lord. Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

"Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living."[1]

Once more we see that the clue to all perplexities is found in the Person of our Lord.

In Him is clearly marked the way of holiness. He is the pattern, and whoso followeth Him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

In Him is all truth, and in His Word is at once satisfaction for the heart and illumination for the mind. In Him is life, and He has come not only to lay down

[1] Thomas à Kempis.

His life for us, but to impart that life to us in all the energizing force of His resurrection.

"I am come," He says, "that ye may have life, and that ye may have it more abundantly."

Here, again, we are face to face with a tremendous claim; let us acknowledge our need and the ability to meet it.

"Thou art the Way; by Thee alone
From sin and death we flee;
And he who would the Father seek
Must seek Him, Lord, by Thee.

"Thou art the Truth; Thy word alone
True wisdom can impart;
Thou only canst inform the mind,
And purify the heart.

"Thou art the Life; the rending tomb
Proclaims Thy conquering arm;
And those who put their trust in Thee
Nor death nor hell shall harm.

"Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life,
Grant us that Way to know,
That Truth to keep, that Life to win,
Where joys eternal flow."

II

These words suggest three practical points for self-examination and prayer—

1. Are we walking in the way? Consider—

(*a*) Its holiness—"The unclean shall not pass over it."

(*b*) Its simplicity—"The wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein." [1]

(*c*) Its security—"No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast go up thereon." [2]

2. Are we growing in the knowledge of the Truth?

"Never yet did there exist a true faith in the Divine Word (by Whom light as well as immortality was brought into the world) which did not expand the intellect, while it purified the heart; which did not multiply the aims and objects of the understanding, while it fixed and simplified those of the desires and passions." [3]

3. Are we, by the right use of the Holy Sacrament, drawing into our souls the very life of Jesus?

O, Almighty God, Whom truly to know is everlasting life; grant us perfectly to know Thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life; that following the steps of Thy holy apostles, Saint Philip and Saint James, we may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[1] Isa. xxxv. 8. [2] Isa. xxxv. 9.
[3] Coleridge, "Aids to Reflection," Aphorism xiii.

VIII

The Secret of Perseverance

"I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman. . . . Abide in Me, and I in you."—S. JOHN xv. 1, 4.

(*Last words after the Holy Eucharist at the end of the Mission.*)

THERE are two thoughts uppermost in many hearts this morning. We are wondering how we shall be able to persevere, and how we shall be able to bring forth fruit. The secret of perseverance and fruitfulness is contained in these words, which were spoken by our blessed Lord on the night before He suffered—

"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the Vine; so neither can ye except ye abide in Me."

The words are addressed to those who have been cleansed by His absolving word, and strengthened by the gift of His own Body and Blood.

It is so with us. Thank God, there are many here who have lately sought and found, in some cases for the first time, the full assurance of pardon and peace through the word of absolution which our Lord Himself speaks

through the lips of His ministers. I will not doubt that others have received the like assurance as they wrestled in prayer alone with God.

To us He says, "Now are ye clean;" and "with a true heart, in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," we have received Jesus in the Holy Sacrament.

To us, as to the first disciples, He tells the secret of union with Himself. No doubt the figure of the vine and the branches was suggested by a visible object.

It is very probable that on the way between the upper chamber and the Garden of Gethsemane our Lord led His disciples into the Temple courts. All night at Paschal-tide the great gates stood open, and pilgrims were accustomed to turn in thither to meditate and pray. The great High Priest, Who on the morrow was to offer the availing sacrifice for sin, may well have offered there the great prayer for unity.[1]

If so, they would see before their eyes the golden vine, the symbol of the Jewish Church—that vine of which the psalmist sang, "Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt." As our Lord looked upon that sculptured splendour, it must have seemed the empty symbol of barren fruitlessness, of profession without performance.

The Jewish Church had failed; and our Lord

[1] S. John xvii.

pointed from that to Himself as the source of a new society. Henceforth the Church of the living God was to flow from the Person of the Incarnate. All believers were to be united with Him and share in His life, as the branches of the vine derive their life and fruitfulness from the one sap which pervades the whole.

II

We are looking forward to the future; assuredly the old temptations will recur; and warm feelings excited by the mission may pass away; but all will be well if we can but keep in union with our Lord. There is no reason why we should let slip our hold on Him; and He has hold of us.

Our wisdom is to concentrate all our efforts on maintaining our spiritual life, and the means of doing so are very simple. We cannot fail so long as we really pray.

Morning by morning we will place ourselves in His Presence with some such words as these: "I am Thine, O save me." "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." Night by night we will examine our consciences, and wash away the daily stains of venial sin by the simple recitation of the words, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive."

Day by day we will try to study His holy Word and say with the psalmist, "Thy words have I hid within my heart, that I should not sin against Thee."

Above all, we will draw near, as often as we may, with hungry hearts, to feed upon the Bread of Life.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Sometimes in the future you will pray for me, lest when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway; and this shall be my prayer for you—

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power, through His Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."[1]

[1] Ephes. iii. 14–19.

APPENDIX

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE INSTRUCTIONS WHICH FOLLOWED THE MISSION SERMONS, AND OF WHICH THE CONGREGATION GENERALLY REPEATED THE HEADS

I

Purpose of the Incarnation

A MISSION sermon is intended to touch the conscience and to bend the will. If it does its work, those who hear it will be ready to receive instruction on the chief parts of Christian faith and duty.[1]

So let us consider the reasons why our Saviour came into the world. He came to reveal the mind and will of God; to redeem the world by the sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross; to regenerate our human nature by infusing into it the energy of His own Divine life.

Putting this into the simplest possible form, we will say and repeat each night—

I. He came to show us the Father.
II. He came to pay the Price of Sin.
III. He came to give us Grace.

Considering to-night the first proposition only, we say—

Revelation was necessary; for though nature, reason, conscience, might teach us the power, wisdom, and

[1] See Acts ii. 37.

holiness of God, nothing less than the incarnation of the Word of God could teach us that God is love.

"Christ came that man might know how much God loved him."[1]

To say that God is love implies the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Christ shows us the Father, and therefore teaches us that we owe Him—

1. Love.
2. Trust.
3. Obedience.

We are the children of God; and nothing can destroy the tie between the parent and the child; therefore, though we have wandered far away from Him, even in the far country we have the right to say, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in Thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called Thy son."

Faith is the precious gift of God, which enables us to claim our place in His family, and accept the salvation brought within our reach. "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."[2] Let us ask for this precious gift and use it to the full.

[1] S. Augustine. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

II

Sin

CHRIST reveals to us the Father, and convinces us of sin, for we have failed to render the love, trust, and obedience which are His due.

Before we can approach our second main heading and see how Christ pays the price of sin, we must spend some time in trying to deepen the sense of sin.

"Fools make a mock at sin," but from the dawn of history wise men have recognized evil in the world, and have endeavoured to explain it.

1. *E.g.* Zoroaster, and Dualism, which will not do, because it denies the omnipotence of God and the moral responsibility of man.

2. *Manichæism*, or the notion that evil lies in matter, but, in fact, bodily acts are indifferent in themselves, and derive their moral character from the will—the body may be as holy as the soul.

3. *Determinism*, which at times seems plausible; but we are conscious at least of partial freedom, and readily acknowledge the difference between actions which we cannot help and those for which we blame ourselves.

In face of these false ways of accounting for evil, let us fall back on the Biblical account that sin lies in the will.

We may select three out of many words for "sin" commonly used in the New Testament—

i. ἁμαρτία (a missing of the mark).

ii. ἀνομία (lawlessness).

iii. παράβασις (breach of the covenant).

We may define sin thus—

Sin is any thought, word, or deed contrary to the known will of God.

III

Deadly and Venial Sin

THE distinction between two kinds of sin is recognized in the Prayer Book and in the Bible.

In the Litany we pray to be delivered from "fornication and all other deadly sin," where a single act is taken as the type of those great sins which separate the soul from God.

In 1 S. John v. 16 and 18 we are plainly taught "there is a sin unto death" and "there is a sin not unto death."

Compare iii. 6, where we read, "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not," implying that the life of one who abides in Christ is a life of freedom from deadly sin, but not from all sin.[1]

Deadly sin is so called because it tends to cut off the soul from God; and that is why it is so terrible to live in deadly sin, and to die in deadly sin means endless separation from the source of life.

These considerations enforce the duty of self-examination, a work which requires—

[1] See S. John i. 8.

1. Sincerity.
2. Courage.
3. Perseverance.

No one is likely to derive good from a mission who does not thoroughly examine himself, so we strongly recommend those who are in earnest to take a form of self-examination, and use it in the way suggested.

IV

The Atonement

WHEN we have in various ways tried to deepen in ourselves the sense of sin, we are ready to look out of ourselves to Him Who paid the price of sin by His precious death upon the Cross.

No theory of the Atonement is to be found in the New Testament (except, perhaps, in Rom. iii. 25, R.V.), but the fact is constantly asserted that Christ died for our sins, and that we are redeemed by His precious blood.

No theory of the Atonement is complete and satisfactory; some are seriously misleading; and in the words of Mr. A. Balfour, "any theory of the Atonement, if it were not too vast for our intellectual apprehension, would surely be too narrow for our spiritual needs."

The famous theory of S. Anselm contained in the Cur Deus Homo may be expressed thus —

Sin is like a great debt which man owes to God.

It is a debt so great that none but God could pay it.

It would not be just for God to pay man's debt, so God was made man, and as man paid man's debt.

The lectures of Dr. Dale, and Dr. Moberly's "Atonement and Personality," carry us much further, but where we cannot understand we must be content to say—

"O Saviour of the world, Who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us; save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee."

V

The Sacramental System

WE must not separate Christ's work for us from Christ's work in us.[1]

"Since God in Christ is generally the medicine which doth cure the world, and Christ in us is that receipt of the same medicine by which we are every one cured, inasmuch as Christ's Incarnation and Passion can be available to no man's good which is not made partaker of Christ, neither can we participate Him without His presence."[2]

"Sacraments are the powerful instruments of God to eternal life—for as our natural life consisteth in the union of the body with the soul, so our life supernatural is the union of the soul with God."[2]

As in the days of His earthly life and ministry there was healing in His touch, so believers still need to draw into themselves the life of Jesus, which is brought within our reach through Church and Sacraments.

Many who love our Lord, and trust in the merits of

[1] See Rom. v. 10. [2] Hooker.

His precious death, have yet to learn how to touch Him.

We must be ready to meet three objections commonly brought against the sacraments:

1. *Formalism.* We admit that there has often been a formal use of sacraments which we deeply deplore, but Christ Himself appointed the matter and the form, and we cannot dispense with the forms without disloyalty to Him.

2. *Materialism.* It is asked, how can water wash the soul? How can bread and wine affect the heart? We must answer, "If we were purely spiritual beings, we might be content with a purely spiritual religion, but in fact we are spirits clothed in flesh, and no religion would really meet our needs which did not take account of the fact that flesh and spirit are linked together. The religion of the Incarnation is essentially sacramental."

3. *Narrowness.* We must admit that some who believe in the sacramental system have been very narrow, but it is possible to cling tenaciously to the treasures we have received, and yet acknowledge that God the Holy Spirit is not bound to the channels of His own appointment.

"God is not tied to sacraments, but we are."

VI

Repentance

CHRIST has paid the price of sin and gives grace, but only to those who seek Him with faith and repentance.

Repentance means a change of heart and mind about sin, and it always includes—

1. Sorrow for sin.
2. Confession of sin.
3. Restitution or amendment.

1. *Sorrow for sin* is of two sorts.[1] Godly sorrow is the gift of God wrought in us by the Holy Spirit.

We must ask for it. (To use the Ash Wednesday collect, and fasting, and meditation on the sufferings of our Lord, will help us to attain it.)

2. *Confession of sin.* The duty of confessing our sins to God is acknowledged by all.[2]

Sometimes it is necessary to confess to others, *e.g.* children to their parents, or in married life, if a husband has sinned against a wife, or a wife against her husband, in a great matter or a little matter, there can be no restoration of entire love and confidence without acknowledgment.

[1] See 2 Cor. vii. 9–11. [2] 1 S. John i. 9.

Sometimes it is necessary or very desirable to confess sins to a minister of God with a view to receiving absolution. (See in Prayer Book—absolution in Morning and Evening Prayer; the warning before Holy Communion; the Office for the Visitation of the Sick; and the Ordination Service, where the words spoken by every Anglican bishop at the ordering of a priest are based on S. John xx. 21, 22.)

3. *Restitution.* Every mission worthy of the name results in cases of restitution.

Crowded congregations and all external tests by which the world measures the "success" of a mission are fallacious, but it shows that hearts are stirred and good is done, when men pay their debts and restore money stolen, in some cases, many years before.

This often happens, and missioners are always ready to advise and help in difficult cases.

The duty of restitution is most obvious in cases which fall under the 8th Commandment, but there are many others where something of the sort is due.

It is an act of restitution—

1. To make up quarrels, owning that one has been wrong.
2. To tell the truth in cases where one has lied.
3. If any one has been a slanderer or hinderer of God's Word by bad example or by idle talk, let him show that he is now in earnest and on the other side.

VII

Holy Communion

IT is lamentable that the Holy Sacrament, which should unite all Christian people to one another and their Lord, has often been the occasion of strife and division.

But in fact Roman Catholics, Primitive Methodists, and all kinds of Church-people, readily admit that in going to Holy Communion—

1. We obey the plain command of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. We act in thankful remembrance of His death.
3. We desire the closest possible union with Him.

Making the most of this very real unity, we inquire further, and we find—

1. In the Gospels Christ said, "This is My Body. This is My Blood." We remember the old rule that in the study of Scripture the interpretation which is furthest from the letter is furthest from the truth.

2. We find that typical and representative fathers assert—

"Bread from the earth receiving the invocation of.

God is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly."[1]

"The Bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is no longer mere bread, but the Body of Christ."[2]

3. The Church of England rejects with equal emphasis transubstantiation and the Zuinglian denial of the Real Presence.

We may express our faith in words attributed to Queen Elizabeth—

> "Christ was the Word that spake it,
> His was the hand that break it,
> And what His Word doth make it,
> That I believe and take it."

We must bear in mind that—

1. The Holy Communion was ordained "for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ," and therefore it is our duty to make it the prominent and central act of worship.

2. We must receive the Holy Communion with reverence, faith, and love, and with an increasing frequency in proportion to our advance in the knowledge of our Lord.

[1] Irenæus. [2] St. Cyril of Jerusalem.

VIII

The Rule of Life

EVERY Christian, who is in earnest, should make and try to keep a definite rule of life about these points.

1. *Prayer*—which should be offered to God, devoutly kneeling, at least night and morning, and it is well to adopt the psalmist's rule, "In the evening, and the morning, and at noonday will I pray."

We should consider the forms of prayer, whether written or extempore, which we use, and see that they include adoration, confession, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving.

2. *Bible reading.* It is well to read at least one of the daily lessons, and to devote a fixed time, if possible in the early morning, to meditation.

3. *Public worship and Holy Communion.* Our attendance at Church on Sundays, holy-days, and week-days should be recognized as a matter of obligation, and especially we should have our regular times for receiving Holy Communion. Once a month is a very good rule to begin with, and a very bad rule to go on with.

4. *Fasting.* We should decide definitely in what way to observe the days of fasting and abstinence prescribed by the Church, on principles which are derived from our Lord Himself.

5. *Almsgiving.* We should set aside a definite proportion of an annual income or a weekly wage to spend on the worship of God and the service of man.

6. We should discover, and determine to avoid in future, whatever has been in the past an occasion of sin—*e.g.* we probably know well that there are certain persons, places, pleasures, pictures, books, perilous to purity or faith, and we must avoid them as we would avoid the sins to which they lead.

The substance of all the Instructions will be found at greater length in the second series of the author's Letters to a Godson—an attempt to give a reasonable account of Christian doctrine—published by Messrs. Mowbray.

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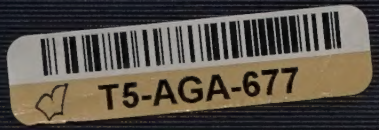
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